

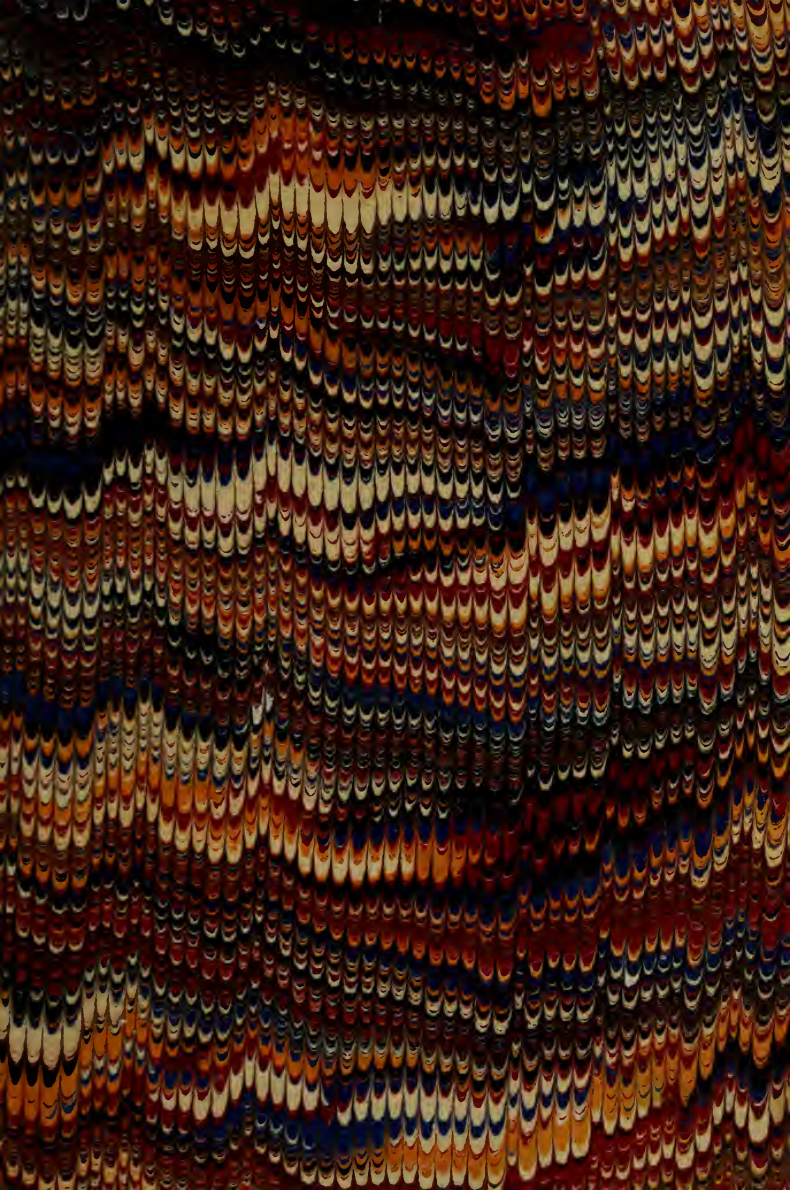
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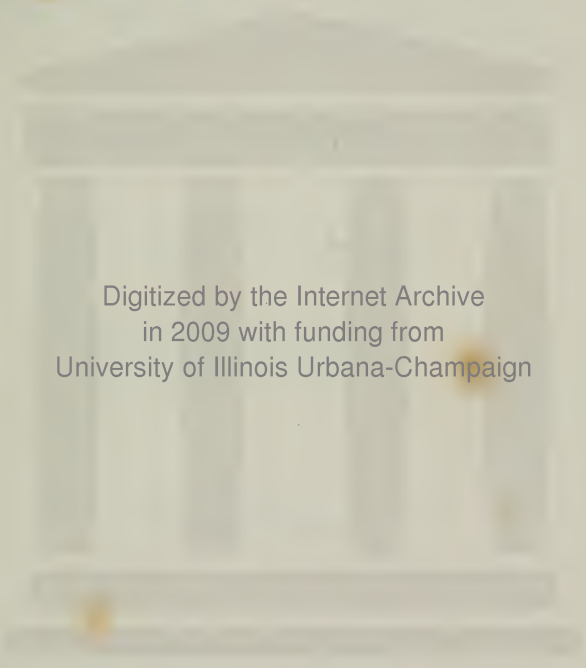


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THE PICAROON;

OR,

THE MERCHANT SMUGGLER.

A TALE OF THE SEA.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MAKANNA."

"The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their lore can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Etna's breast of flame."

BYRON.

Second Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1845.



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THE PICAROON.

CHAPTER I.

“ O, that hallowed form is ne’er forgot,
Which first Love traced ;
Still it lingering haunts the greenest spot
On Memory’s waste.

“ ’Twas odour fled
As soon as shed,
’Twas Memory’s dream ;
’Twas a light that ne’er can shine again
On life’s dull stream.”

MOORE.

As we have already told, the alarm she had felt, on hearing of Blandford’s danger, had revealed to Carema the secret of her own heart ; and as her bosom swelled, for the

first time, with the sweet delirium of awakened passion, she blushed and trembled under contending emotions, until the startling fear of maiden coyness prevailed in the sudden gush of tears that followed, and relieved her from a consciousness that was growing too intense.

Fortunately, the immediate cause of her excitement remained unknown; and as soon as she had escaped from the tender assiduities of her friends, she sought her chamber, and in its quiet seclusion schooled her young heart into that self-command and apparent indifference, which are woman's best, perchance, her only, defence from the low devices of a world, which treats her tenderness as children gather flowers!—marring the form of beauty with a touch too rude.

This innocent deceit, if useful, had its pains and penalties:—she yearned for even the slightest intelligence, and yet she feared to request that an effort should be made to

obtain it, lest, a tremor of voice, or some unguarded look, might betray an interest too deep for friendship;—and thus the long and anxious hours crept by, until Hagglesstone returned.

The worthy Quaker had been out with the view of rendering any assistance within his power; and he had brought home the unpleasant news of Kenrick's charge against his nephew.

Carema's pale cheek flushed at the certainty of Frank's escape, and that quick sense of joy, at the moment, left her unconscious of the rest;—but as the circumstances of the charge were repeated, the fond diffidence of concealed affection gave way to burning indignation, and she repelled the idea with all the enthusiasm of that aroused eloquence, which only love can dictate.

“Humph!”—ejaculated Ephraim, and then ensued a long pause, during which the Quaker

left an ominous shake of the head, to imply his protest of non-acquiescence.

“Ah, my Love,”—he continued,—“thou art zealous over much:—it is well to hope kindly, but not to decide prematurely. The conduct of the young man we speak of, perchance, hath not in other matters been altogether without blame!—Thou must understand, that I told his uncle to send him to me, touching the explanation of a security in which he was a responsible party, and behold, he came not!—The money, it is said, remaineth in his possession; and now he is a fugitive, and answers not to a charge of greater moment.”

“Remember, dear Sir, that these are but charges to which he has had no chance of answering,—not proofs! they must,—indeed, they ‘must’ be false:—I could not, if I would, believe them!—That Mr. Blandford should stoop to petty frauds and villanies like these,—it is indeed impossible!”

“ I could wish, peradventure, that thou wert as reasonable as thou art sincere ; but, alas, I am grieved, that I must tell thee more. The Peace Officer, whom the ignorant deride under the name of “ Big Ben,” hath a history to tell, of finding him we speak of in suspicious company :—yea, on the very night that the outlawed Captain of the Blowzy Bess broke in rude contumely from the arrest of justice,—and, doubtless, he was privy to the fact.”

The confidence of Carema remained unshaken, but Ephraim’s ear ‘ was deaf to the voice of the charmer ;’ and, as the agitation of the question seemed but to confirm him the more in his preconceived assurance of Blandford’s guilt, she had the prudence to restrain her feelings, and to change the subject.

From this period, Carema carefully avoided any conversation of which Blandford was the topic ; while, unconsciously to herself,

the firm conviction she entertained of her guardian's error,—not to say his injustice!—impaired her confidence in his discretion as to other matters. Under these impressions, therefore, when efforts were delicately made by Hagglestone and his wife to break through her intimacy with Madalena, they had rather a contrary tendency; and her natural partiality for the fascinating Italian was heightened by prejudice, until the influence of the latter became unduly great, or rather all preponderating.

Yet, even now, if this influence had been ostensibly directed against her guardian, the high principled and affectionate Carema would have caught the alarm, and the charm had been broken; but, as the advance had been made on neutral ground, success was insured before the attack was understood or suspected.

The imagination of Carema had loved to dwell upon some few particulars that had

been related of her lost, and, in one sense forgotten, mother ; and often, in childhood, these holy musings had suffused her cheeks with tears, and thrilled her infant heart with yearning tenderness. How sweet then, to recline on the affectionate breast of Madalena, and listen to long treasured tales of that beloved one :—to hear of her, as still she lived in the fond memories of her friends, —among whom Madalena's mother had been one of the most intimate :—to hear of her domestic habits, of her amusements ; and even of walks she once had loved.

The moon-lit walks in Sicily, that led through citron groves, on the bright margin of the rolling deep,—when all the air, on the first hush of coming night, grown humid with mingled dews and sweets, as closing flowers breathed out their fragrance with the day,—seemed but one sigh of love !—When the clear bosom of the sea, bright in its dark transparency, as the Magician's glass ; disgorged from

its abyss white bubbling bursts of foam,—that came and vanished, like hopes of happiness in widowed hearts, too pure and beautiful to last amid the sad realities of life.

Oh, these were sweet, if mournful hours ; and when Madalena broke through the thread of her discourse, to welcome and intreat Carema to be indeed a sister ; and visit Sicily with her,—the mellow cadence of her voice, grown ardent with her theme, and the warm sunshine of the heart, that beamed in every glance of those soul-flashing eyes, seemed scarce to leave a chance of joy beside ; and thus insensibly, that sweet and distant home, ‘the garden of the world, fair Italy!’ became the haven of Carema’s hopes,—the image of her dreams.

Unfortunately the wishes she expressed on this subject were not always met by her guardian with that cheerful placidity, that softened his denials on other occasions ; and by degrees

a social gloom ensued between them, that every day became more painful. It was besides most unfortunate, that the suspicions entertained in respect to the views of Madalena were entirely concealed ; so that the style of estrangement, with which she was soon treated, appeared at best unamiable,—and the direct hint for her departure, when at last it came, seemed altogether harsh and unprovoked ; —and indeed, in one sense, little else than a singular act of capricious unkindness towards Carema herself, whose dear and intimate friend she was become,—and now in a closer sense than ever.

It is true, that five minutes' conversation might have explained all this, so far at least, that Carema would have understood that the motives were kind, if mistaken :—but his hasty and violent condemnation of Blandford had weakened her reliance on her guardian's candour, and she had long avoided to avow her feelings to a greater extent than was ac-

tually necessary in matters, where she had reason to apprehend that his prejudices were already marshalled on the other side.

Concord and mutual esteem can alone consecrate the happiness of home!—without these, all that gold can purchase,* or luxury invent, are cold and comfortless, as the glittering icebergs of the frozen sea:—nay, more, even affection, without respect, is but a blighted flower; the sweet wine soured; the gushing fountain turbid at its source.

Carema grew pale and thoughtful; the book she read ceased to inform or interest, and yet she read mechanically, as such poor occupation promised an oblivion, for the time at least, from the more irksome sallies of unbidden thought. The exotic plants, that she had nurtured from a child, threw forth fresh branches unobserved in wild luxuriance, when, but a few short months before, each swelling bud was an object fostered with delight. Even her new-born friendship with Madalena was

dashed with a strange bitterness! She could not find a voice to avow her anxiety and partiality for Blandford, as he himself had uttered not a word that might excuse it;—and with that tender secret was buried half the comfort of the only solace she had left,—the converse of affection.

It was while her spirit was thus enthralled with melancholy thoughts, that a letter was put into her hands from the “Count Montrano.” With a strange earnestness, it echoed the pleadings of Madalena, and urged a visit to Italy, with eloquent appeals to her feelings of filial affection and propriety, grounded on the serious thought, that the few remaining relatives and friends of her family might not live to welcome her return to the land of her birth, were the visit long delayed.

But the letter went beyond this, and delicately hinted the reasons, that would probably induce the friends around her to oppose her wishes if they tended towards Italy:—and

representing their reluctance, as an amiable weakness to be guarded against ; it went on to enforce the propriety of her adopting the form of a written declaration, *provided for in her father's will*, if she wished to place herself under the protection of her Italian guardian, Montrano, and argued, that the existence of that clause was in itself a fair presumption, that her father had foreseen the necessity of the step she was now advised to take, so that the accomplishment of the 'will' in that particular, might be considered as a sacrifice to filial piety.

While busied in the perusal of this letter, Madalena had continued to gaze upon her friend with that deep fixture of the eye, that speaks of eagerness and doubt. When she had read it through, the first idea of Carema, was to communicate its contents to Mr. Haggles-tone, and to support its purport, by stating her desire to make the proposed voyage ; but, in this judicious view, she was over-ruled by Ma-

dalena, who represented it as a plan likely to ruffle the temper of her guardian without advantage ; while, if Carema made the proposition to visit Italy, as entirely her own act, and accompanied the request with a written claim, to put herself under the guardianship of Montrano, it would show that her decision was already formed too strongly to be shaken, while the worthy Ephraim's sense of duty towards the dead, would hardly allow him to attempt to render the express provision of her father's 'will' of no effect.

Carema felt that this would be at best, an abrupt, and after all, perhaps rather an ungracious procedure ; but, so fearful was she of counteracting prejudices, if she adopted the more gentle mode of asking advice, and so painfully anxious was she become for the intended voyage, that she resigned her better judgment, though still with a soft reluctance, and promised to follow implicitly the guidance of Madalena.

As predicted, the delicacy and offended pride of Hagglestone rendered him unwilling to discuss a subject which was claimed as an object of right, by one, from whom he had never before heard aught, but the pleadings of affection;—and with a chilled heart and altered tone, the astonished Quaker unwillingly assented, it being arranged that the voyage should be made on the first “fitting opportunity.”

In the last clause of the sentence, there was, it may be remarked, a little convenient mental reservation, as it virtually left the time to be fixed by himself:—and by the bye, to let the Reader understand the whole bearing of the question, it must be told, that the worthy Hagglestone would never have agreed to the plan in any sense, had he not secretly formed the resolution of accompanying his wayward ward on this, as he deemed it, her ill-omened and perilous expedition.

Lulled with the idea that he had thus rendered every thing secure, Hagglestone no

longer viewed Madalena as the serpent in his path he had before considered her. The abduction of Carema was now, as he thought, beyond her power ; and after all, he acknowledged to himself, that her wish to preserve the society of so sweet a companion by running away with her, if a little selfish, was too natural not to be forgiven !—He did not quite like to remember her vehement praises of the “ Lord Montrano ; ”—and far less indeed, did he relish the poetical rhapsodies addressed to his fair ward, in that nobleman’s “ very juvenile and hyperbolical epistles,” as he was wont rather sneeringly to term them :—but after all, if he, Ephraim Hagglesstone, went to Italy himself, and continued at Carema’s side, he valued not such vanities a rush !

In fine, the good man had never felt better satisfied on any occasion, than with his secret adjustment of this affair ; and soon after, on being called up to Town on a matter of business, he left home with the light

heart and smiling cheek of one who feels a presentiment of happiness at hand.—How often are such emotions, false and fleeting as the dazzling beams that gild the evening clouds, that in their silent, sweet serenity, are still deep charged with the thunder and the tempest, that shall affright the coming hours of darkness.

CHAPTER II.

“ But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And there hath been thy bane ; there is a fire
And motion of the soul, which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire !—
————— a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all that ever bore,”

BYRON.

THE droll contortions of the clown, who apes the rope-dancer without his pole, when to stand is to fall, and to stir is to stumble ! are scarcely more amusingly absurd, than the predictions of those good people, who suffer their fancies to run riot with the pre-

liminaries of a story, and jump to a conclusion before they have ground to spring from.

Take the caution in good part, dear Reader, and wait till we have dealt our cards, before you attempt to sort your hand; for although 'Hearts' are always trumps in a novel, yet, Beloved One, you may chance to place the 'knave' before the 'ace!' and missing 'honours,' to lose the 'odd trick,' by playing at random.

"Mercy! Fazzello;—why, you tabour the tapestry as a groom would dress a horse-cloth, and have no more tenderness for Venus and the Graces, than a fish-wife shows for lobsters."

"Mean you, as to the pegging or the boiling, my dainty, dear Signora?"

"I mean that you are a lout, to tabour as you do, Fazzello."

"Pah! you slander me, Signora:—the dust hung on these pretty shams of the sex,

till they looked as tawny as so many gipsies floundering in a horse-pond! But, heigho, presto! a little judicious flagellation has re vivified their pallid charms into the roses and lilies of sweet sixteen!—Look, Signora,—they seem to blush with a thousand sweet sensations:—the fountain too, grows marvelously,—nay, alarmingly transparent!—every instant discovers more and more, and presently”——

“And presently, sirrah, I shall prove your empty noddle a better drum than you have made the arras:”—and ‘suited the action to the word,’ a rap of her fan gave the flip-pant youth a momentary check.

“Faith! Signora, such a tickler as that on the knowledge-box of our lord and master, had saved us from a world of trouble.”

“How so, Fazzello?”

“Simply enough, Signora:—it had cracked his sconce, and let out the bee that has

stung his fancy into the fantastic foolery of dusting out this hideous old den of the mountains."

"Hideous! Fazzello:—oh! what a witless lout art thou!—The Castello is strong enough to defy an army!—romantic enough to bewilder a nun!—grand enough for a prince!—gay—no, I won't tell a fib either: no, it is too 'majestic' to be 'gay;'—and then it is so spacious, and so comfortable: yes! it pleases me altogether, which is more than you will ever do, Fazzello!"

"Well then, since I've no chance of being chartered by Cupid on the wholesale plan, it will be best to turn petty dealer at once, and only make the attempt in a little way:—retail and detail,—my dainty, dear Signora!—item, a kiss!—carry one, and ditto."

"Ditto, a rap of the fan, Fazzello!—Really, your impertinence is beyond bearing!

Come, Sir, keep your distance, or I'll scream!—yes, loud enough to affright the very seamews in the cliffs below.”

“ And a charming chorus it would be, Signora ; but I thank you for hinting so delicately, that we are *quite* alone !”

“ Now if you were not *quite* so great a ‘ magpie,’ and had but one ‘ ounce’ of discretion, I could tell you such a secret !—Yes, Fazzello ! and one too that would make your ears tingle for a month !”

“ A secret !—excellent !—There is always mischief, and plenty of it too, in a ‘ lady’s secret :’—I’m all attention, Signora ;—mute as a fish ;—discreet as a cardinal ;—and, better still, as curious as Solomon !”

“ Well then—no, I won’t !—those glistening, toad-like eyes, promise any thing but innocence. They’re worse than basilisks in this strange murky light. No ; I’ll not trust you even with a word !—no, nor any thing else, till the lattices are drawn up, the win-

dows thrown open, and the free and honest air of the balcony is blowing freshly in our faces."

"All this is accomplished, and now, my very circumspect Signora."

"Well, after all, I don't know that I will!—you're always so curious, Fazzello:—well, come a little farther out into the light; but then we must only whisper, you know, lest we should be overheard."

"Yes, hold your head forward, and listen. Really, Fazzello, you are too amusing:—why in that sneaking, lack-a-daisical attitude, you look so much like a puppy with his ears newly cropped, that I can't get on for laughing! Well, you remember the Count's niece, Signora Madalena, who, 'the holy Virgin' preserve us! committed sacrilege.—Now don't make faces, for indeed she did!—Yes, she clambered up a fig tree, and so scaled the garden wall of her convent."

"A choice receipt for showing a pretty

ankle, or so,—by moonlight;—but proceed, Signora.”

“ It was a deadly sin, Fazzello!—and the Count, very properly, you know, had her put in close confinement:—but instead of keeping her there, as every body expected, it now appears that she was secretly put on ship board, and sent abroad.”

“ It was singularly kind of the Count, Signora; for, if my memory serves, the lady’s lover was a sailor.”

“ Nonsense!—you know as well as I do, that the Count had no such motive, or he would not have thwarted her at first:—no; he has some personal object, or perhaps he is himself controlled by those mysterious strangers who call, as you know, at intervals, and never are denied!—Whether the Count is sick or well, busy or at leisure, it is just the same; early or late, they thunder at the porch, and demand an audience, with looks as bold, and voices as loud, as that

with which a Bandit might snatch a purse ! I would give the world, Fazzello, to find out who they are.”

“ So you fish with a ‘ little secret ’ to catch a ‘ great one ! ’—very pretty angling for a lady :—and your ‘ ground bait ’ is nothing less than the ‘ World ! ’—or, say a Kiss !—for, in a woman’s estimation, they are valued on a par.—Now give the reward first, and perhaps I may essay at something in the way of satisfaction.”

“ Oh ! what a faint-hearted nibble, Fazzello :—it is plain that your mouth is not large enough to swallow the bait ; you are but a gudgeon of the summer fry, and will slip through the mesh without being felt !—I must fish in deeper water, to have but a chance of the secret.”

“ More crafty than wise, my pretty one ; I could give a guess ! ”

“ To challenge is not to fight ;—a guess is easily ventured, Fazzello.”

“ Well, then, to shoot my arrow in the ring, and prove my guess!—what think you of their being ‘ Usurers,’ Signora?—All the world says, that the Count spent his fortune before he had it; ergo, he borrowed largely, and having continued to spend, he has not paid. Depend upon it, that in one way or the other, these strangers have him in their power!—at Rome and at Naples, they follow him the same:—that is, one at a time, for they never hunt in couples;—the life of either may be the safer, while the other remains at a distance to avenge its loss.”

“ What, you think that the Count dislikes them.”

“ To gather from his looks, he hates them mortally, and never had Page more reason to watch a Master’s looks.—Beshrew them, many a sullen hour have they ensured for me.”

“ Well, thank the Saints! the Count takes no more notice of us women-kind, than

as if he were a marble statue altogether ; and we so many jointed dolls !—nay, Fazzello, you need not shake your curly locks so knowingly ; it is a fact to my certain knowledge :—he is as cold as the snows of *Ætna* !”

“ I could prove your simile a bad one ; remember the dangerous heat that glows within !—but your ‘certain knowledge’ is something still more equivocal, Signora.”

“ You shall find it as plain as your own ‘conceit,’ Fazzello !—Once I made up my mind, that his Excellency should notice me,—yes, whether he would or no !—Yes, I did :—and I will again, Fazzello, if I like !—Well, I was dressed very much as I am now ; my veil thrown back ;—my *corsaletto* a little loose, for it was so very warm,—and orange flowers in my hair, when I slipt before him into the library, just at his usual hour of study in the evening ; and sitting down in the large crimson velvet chair that he always uses, I pretended to be fast asleep.”

“ And what then, Signora ? ”

“ Why, what do you think, Fazzello ?— Nothing ! or what was worse than nothing.— One would have fancied, you know, that his Excellenza would have spoken ; said something very pretty, or touched my shoulder :—or he might—yes, he might have stolen a kiss !— and then I should have started up and been very angry ;—and, if he had repeated the ‘ offence ’—which might indeed have happened with some people, that I could name of far less importance,—why then I should have got him to promise the little garden that my mother wants, as a penance. Dear me, to think that she has had the keeping of the Castello so long, Fazzello, and not to get such a trifle.

“ Well, who would have thought it ?—Do you know, that he seemed to overlook me altogether ; and reaching down some heavy volumes, he laid them on my knees, just as if it had been on the seat of an empty

chair,—and then taking them up one by one, with half-shut eyes, he blew the dust off their edges till I was half stifled in the cloud.”

“And still your patience and your mock slumbers were continued with due discretion, eh, Signora?”

“No, indeed! I jumped up with a scream—Yes, and one loud enough to make him press his hands on his ears, while I bounded out of the room in an instant.—Well, another time in the corridor, I stooped down, pretending to be searching for something in one of the lower drawers of the ebony cabinet, till his Excellenza walked up plump against me!—would you believe it? he was silent still!—walked off as if he had been in a dream, and made no more apology, than as if he had touched a stock or a stone.”

“A strange insensibility under all the circumstances!—but take care, Signora, your next experiment may prove rather more con-

clusive than you wish :—Perhaps he was thinking of the picture !”

“ What, the half-scorched picture rescued from the fire at Palermo, that my mother sighs to hear of :—the portrait of her the lady-love of his boyhood ; she, the haughty Signora, that jilted him for a heretic :—Strange stories are told both of the picture and the lady.”

“ Not so, Signora ; the picture I mean is fresh and glowing ; the face it shows entrancing :—youthful as the un-sunned rose, soft, sweet and blissful, as an angel of the blest.”

“ Ah, what, Fazzello !—I am sure that if you admire the picture so much, you need not trouble yourself to stand here talking nonsense to me by the hour !—No, Sir ! you had better attend the Count, and learn of his Eccellenza, to prefer the shadow to the substance.—A picture, indeed !—a baby-face !”

“ Bless me ! here comes the Count !—Now, though he can’t distinguish one at a time, I

have no doubt but that he would see us both together:—stand aside, and I will slip out of sight in a twinkling.”

The words were hardly passed, when the madcap, Rosalia, (the sweetest and most coquetish of all *donzelletti*) bounded down the marble stairs of the balcony, with the grace and celerity of an antelope. With a smile of fond delight, her lover watched the vanishing sylph in her swift descent. Now, as she swung round a corner with her light dress expanding like a parachute, she seemed some airy being borne forward, as in a cloud; and then as she gained the citron bower beneath, her fairy figure as she danced along, with her snowy shoulders glistening through the leaves, left him but little inclination to think of pictures; and still less in danger of preferring a shadow to the substance.

The martial step of the Count Montrano now sounded from within, and Fazzello had scarcely time to compose his features into

the thoughtful air of mute attention, with which he was wont to meet his lord, before his attendance was required.

In passing back from the bright and sunny balcony, into the state saloon of the *Castello*, how strong was the contrast. All without, from the beauteous form of her he loved, to the waving foliage; the ripe and luscious fruits, the clustering flowers, and the humming insects that drink their liquid sweets, was bathed in one rich rosy gleam of evening light! Within the saloon, all was magnificent, but cold; stately in a sombre pomp; and then, as it were, over-shadowed and subdued by the presence of the proud noble that trod its inlaid floor.

The aristocratic bearing of Montrano had nothing of that dry supercilious pride that marks the titled minions of a court; or that renders more than usually ridiculous, the 'money-made' lordling of to-day: nor was it debased by sullen legal craft; or by the

hog-like indolence of a vulgar mind, that has its "greatness thrust" upon it. The mien of the Italian noble was exalted, and his eye commanding,—but they seemed not so by assumption, but in their nature;—as the glance of the eagle braves the sun. The lines upon his ample forehead too, were those of thought, but without anxiety; and bore the impress of a serene and penetrating intellect. The deep shadowed eyes, the prominent nose and finely chiseled lips, had much of the ancient Roman grace; but the mouth was wanting in the simplicity of the antique; and the ever-changing lights that played about its muscles, mingled a Grecian subtlety with the voluptuous gusto of Italy. It was a smile that might betray when most it pleased; that lightened to a look of thirsty eagerness;—a flash of sensual joy that beauty blushed to meet, and might not construe!—a something it were wise to fear, and difficult to shun; a smile to ruin and to fascinate. The

complexion was clear and bright, dashed with the manly bronze of the South : and the figure moulded with a light, yet muscular grace, that promised the activity, although the heat of youth was past, was well in keeping with the energy of soul that every lineament expressed.

Such stood Montrano,—dressed in a light hunting garb of olive-tinted velvet slightly embroidered, and only armed with a *couteau de chasse*, the guard of which was of silver, richly sculptured. So stood Montrano, the spendthrift of his ancestral house ;—the exiled gambler, and the bold compeer of lawless men ; and, by report at least, as deeply stained with lawless deeds ; and that even when the boyish, banished, slighted lover of the ‘Rose of Palermo,’ the young and fair Carema !—she whose fearful fate he had so strangely re-appeared to witness.

These were the legends of his youth, once boldly told ;—the ready random tale

sportively rehearsed by the noble at his lady's side,—and equally by the Bandit at his forest fire; but long since hushed in fear;—or only whispered, as the adder crawls in secret!—for he they told of was grown too powerful for scandal, and the cloak-hid stiletto, it was supposed, had more than once repaid the public accusation with an unseen death.

Of these grave charges, some were false,—and some malicious exaggerations; but still, enough remained to render the Count a marked, and a dangerous man, even in the eyes of the most moderate; and thus his first efforts at ‘reformation’ were repulsed with contumely! until, in the indignation of a wounded heart, he learnt to hate the world,—rather than the vices that had provoked its malice; and, for the future, with a stern contempt, he resolved to live within the pale of society as a concealed spy lingers in the camp of an enemy, whose best hope is to deceive and ruin.

Henceforth, Montrano sought no fellowship; the gay and reckless, who hung upon his friendship for defence,—he spurned, as the falcon scares the meaner hawks; and turned as proudly with a cold disdain, from those few men of rank and character, who, from old habit, and family connection, found still a hand to offer.

Yet, in this selfish policy, there was an equal self-delusion. It is not in the power of man to live in independence of his kind. The meanest miser, that heaps his hoard in dust and darkness, dreams with an idiotic joy of that loud fame his death shall trumpet to the world! And thus Montrano, while he shunned all show of courtesy, and deemed his bosom purged of any weak fond hankerings after human sympathy;—that holy bond of frail humanity, that makes us suffer and enjoy with others,—was yet a very slave to the empty conceit of over-awing the proud in their own daring! Whe-

ther by sudden bursts of prodigality, that left their wonted splendour in the shade; or, by a rivalry for some gay heartless intrigant,—or worse, by some arbitrary stretch of feudal power. In either case, the Count's extravagance, his boldness, and presumption! left little chance of failure. Not that he cared for the triumph for itself; his object was to crush and mortify,—and the prize of the hottest contest was thrown away as soon as won, with the indifference of the school-boy, who tramples on the hunted butterfly.

This he might term that flattering vice, the Demon, feigned a virtue, 'Pride!'—but no,—it was rather the overflowing bitterness of a heart rankling from the scourge of scorn; and ready at any desperate chance to cast a portion of its load on other men. There was no less a sense of injury, and a too natural thirst of vengeance; for Montrano felt that an adverse fate had driven him from the peaceful

shores of happiness, and that his compeers in rank and fortune, instead of stretching out an aiding hand, had lit false fires to lure him on to wreck and ruin! It was a joy, that these at last had felt and feared his power! It was no less a joy, to vex them as a marvel!—for strange past thought, the once despised and beggared Montrano seemed to have gold at will!—His family palazzo at Rome had past into other hands; his ample estates in Tuscany and in Sicily were mortgaged past their value, and his very pictures graced the cabinets of foreign Princes. All this was true,—and yet among the ancient noblesse of Italy, for vice or pleasure, none could outbid or dare the lonely churl Montrano! Did he gamble deeply, and win unfairly?—or, had he ventured still more disgraceful chances on the road to riches?—These were questions asked with vindictive curiosity; guessed at, but never answered. Month after month he was absent, and none

knew whither he had gone! and then he reappeared as suddenly; at Rome, or at Milan, at Naples, or at Venice, as it might seem, in mere caprice. His followers, few and trusty, were ever at his side; and he seemed to have the charm of attaching men of the lower rank to a singular extent; but this, as the Count avoided politics, was little thought of.

Such was Montrano,—as he had been moulded by, and appeared to the society he affected to be free from, and to despise: but to himself, he had another nature;—and so has every man; we none of us are what we seem!—a Prince will suck a grape with pleasure, neither more nor less, than feels a Beggar; and Montrano's real objects, and individual enjoyments, were little else than those which, in different degrees, and different shapes, make children of us all. To cast the swooping falcon on the wind, and watch her strike her fleeting quarry:—to

steer a vessel in a dangerous sea; or ride where others feared to follow:—to thread the mountain glens; or gaze upon the canopy of heaven when thronged with thunder clouds: or when the noon of night, grown awful with the silence of a world, seems animate with stars!—to shelter the oppressed; for sternest natures (and his was far from such) have seasons when the heavenly dews of pity sink into the breast:—but, more than these, Montrano had a heart!—had loved with a devotion few can feel,—yet fruitlessly; and to those blighted hopes and seared affections, more than to his nature, were to be ascribed the errors of his course.

The tenderness, that should have been the balm and solace of existence, had been to him its bane; and every recollection of the past served but to give annoyance to the present. Even from the first, his love had been as a flower sown on a sterile soil, it could not last. With a precocity of intellect

and feeling, even as a boy, he had wooed a woman rich in the summer of her charms; and, as a natural consequence, her smiles of indulgent friendship soon faded in disdain: then followed the follies of a desperate passion. And then arose the stern interference that drove him into exile.

When he returned, the dream of possible delight that had maddened him before, was grown too real, but not the less entrancing! Even in the possession of a rival,—and as a young exulting mother, she for whom he had pined so long, and suffered so severely, seemed but the more tormentingly divine! Her angel smile, and eager looks of love, though never bent on him,—and pure as a Madona's, shot fiery thrills of ecstasy through every nerve. His musings in the day, and midnight thoughts, became intoxicating poison!—all that followed, another page may tell.—She died: and in the care of the orphan she had left, Montrano found a pious satisfaction:—

it was,—or at least it seemed, in some degree a slight atonement; and perhaps the more so, as he had transferred the infant to a foreign shore, in strict obedience to her parent's choice.

Montrano's after life had passed in the pursuit of that perverted, bad ambition, we have before described;—until by chance, the smothered volcano of his breast was lit anew; the picture of the young Carema, received so suddenly, beamed on his eye the full effulgence of her mother's charms:—he gazed and fainted.

The swoon was past;—and as he looked again, the burning tears of passion scorched his cheeks like molten lava, his brain and heart were all on fire!—that accident had given him back the chance of bliss that Destiny had seemed before to cancel; and a wild ecstatic,—an innocent hope, shot swift as flashing lightning through every vein!—The interval between the first and second vision

of delight appeared but as a point, a blank in being: youth seemed to glow again! and the strong hope, in its own zeal resistless! promised that all things might be possible.

This tumult of emotion, which we have so inadequately attempted to portray, had subsided; and, with a pregnant brain, Montrano had already shaped out circumstances, which, as he fondly hoped, would eventually achieve the realization of all that his ardent imagination promised:—in a word, he was now grown calm, self-satisfied, and full of confidence.

“Fazzello, are the Maltese artisans fully instructed in my wishes:—remember, that the gilding must equal all that fancy can invent,—no matter for the cost. The artificial moonlight, with the misty fountain and the bath, are more than beautiful! they are worthy of the Turkish paradise.—Ah, but well thought of;—these must join the cham-

ber;—say by a conservatory, covered with amber-tinted glass:—a marble pavement down the centre, white as glistening snow, with verdant mossy banks, all filled with blooming plants, and here and there choice statues; soft melting forms of beauty, such as young poets fancy when they love! This may be difficult, but still it must be done.—The architect may carry out the necessary projection over the platform of the eastern rampart. The carved foliage and china-painted flowers, that wreath around and canopy the large Venetian mirrors, are finished to the life, and cheat the senses! I'll have them scented with such subtle odours, as may provoke the thirst of pleasure!—wild, insatiate pleasure! The aerial music, too, is well devised; touch but a spring, and heavenly melodies awake! Thus much is well; but, above all, is due precaution taken that these artisans have no idea of our locality, in this wild nook of the Apennines?

Have you prevented all access to this side of the Castello?—for, but a single glance of yonder heaving ocean, and of the neighbouring shore, would tell our secret.”

“ Your Excellenza’s orders have been most carefully fulfilled; the trusty muleteers that brought them hither, travelled by night, and by the more unknown and solitary mountain tracts;—and since their sojourn here, they have seen no more than the inside walls of the Castello.”

“ It is well: and yet, Fazzello, I could wish that they were safely hence! But let that rest:—I shall have business for you at Palermo; if all speeds well, a guest will soon arrive:—but, no; I’ll speak of that again. Look to the mews,—the falcons miss their proper castings; young Marco is grown careless of his charge.—The last new purchase, White Juno, from the Alps, is vilely haggard!—let them see that she sleeps not night nor day; I’ll have her tamed, and

suddenly!—trained to the fist; to answer to the call, even from her pride of place, her highest pitch, ready and forward as a spaniel.—A glorious bird that Juno, and one to add a grace to Beauty's hand; yes, though the lady were a Queen!"

Montrano paused; his eye gazed proudly towards the clouds, as if the noble bird he spoke of was to be seen then beating on the wind! but soon his glance fell lower; he started, and listened with a deep anxiety.

"Santo Paolo!—Ah!—a flash on the dark and distant ocean:—yes! the thunder follows, rap on rap;—by heaven, those guns are shotted heavily!—A sea-fight, Fazzello; but as yet, the vessels lie too low upon the offing for a view. Fetch me the glass. Poor boy, he little thinks how much his master's interest is involved in those dark spots that flash and crackle in the distance, as if they were the playthings of an infant's sport."

God send the sun were down ; one hour of gloom might save a life I prize far dearer than my own."

This ardent wish seemed to bear some promise of its own fulfilment ; for already, the glorious view, on which Montrano gazed from that high balcony, was grown more lovely in the changing light of closing day.

Far in the depth beneath,—lay the moss-grown crags and broken promontories of the Calabrian coast,—with here and there a softer feature interposed ; a woodland glen ; and further, a verdant hill, its side still more intensely green with pendant vines ; and its broad brow dotted with sheep :—and rising in a bold relief, and touched above with flashes of a golden sheen, the precipices seaward, frowned darkly in one broad belt of shade ; except a single rifted cliff, crowned on its topmost ridge with the hoar ruins of an ancient monastery ; on which the light still

rested, as if it were a beacon. Beyond, as if in pride of contrast, the ocean heaved, all luminous in purple splendour. There darkening into green; and then beyond, stretching immensely distant to a silvery offing, on which those fantastic piles of rosy clouds were resting, that in the South portend a coming storm. On the other side, the sea shut in by the Straits of Messina, and hurrying forward with a swift and steady current, reflected on its ripples, deep glorious tints,—from Tyrian purple, to flashes fierce and dazzling, as streams of molten brass, when gushing radiant from the fire.

Immediately beyond,—bright in reflected light, and indenting the liquid mirror on which it rested, with a graceful circling sweep, arose the fortifications; the Pharos, and the Quay of Messina; a thriving city, with tiers of lofty buildings, the windows bright with the setting sun, as plates of burnished gold.

The harbour crowded with vessels, and the town thronged with palaces and churches, appeared within; while the verdant plains of Sicily stretched out around; and over all, at the elevation of twelve thousand feet, crowned with a coronet of flame, the snow-capped summit of the mighty *Ætna*, rose in lonely grandeur beneath the glowing concave of an azure sky.

The hues of the land and water, grew richer and deeper, but more obscure:—suddenly a crimson shadow seemed to swallow all! and with it came the instantaneous transit of southern climes from day to night. The rocks and mountains changed to a grayish black,—and growing indistinct in rising vapours, now seemed but the spectral images of what they were!—The sobbings of a coming breeze awoke!—it swept the distant Ocean, which answered it with drifts of rising spray.

Again the report of cannon seaward, boomed fast and loud!—and now the peaked and wing-like sails of a Xebec gleamed for a moment to the flash;—as transiently, but far beyond, a ship appeared, so packed with sail, that as yet she seemed but a moving cloud of canvas, and dim as a shadow in the air.

Montrano gazed with a breathless interest,—he laid down the glass, and turning deadly pale, he muttered to himself,—

“The signal!—why do they yet delay?—The signal, or she is lost!”

The words seemed to have passed involuntarily, and excited the wonder of Fazzello, who had viewed the whole as an amusement; considering the matter as only one of those piratical attacks, so common from the barbaresque vessels of the Mediterranean. Before he had time to think again, a rocket, with crimson stars, was thrown up on the

shore at the Cada De Volpe, (the Fox's Tail), a promontory of the Calabrian coast, opposite to Peloras, in Sicily, and where the Straits are most contracted. The Xebec altered her course, as if in obedience to the signal; and presently she seemed as she would stand away for Malta. The night was all the while growing darker, and rapid scuds of rain obscured the atmosphere: the sails of the Xebec were now hardly visible; and as yet they watched,—an explosion occurred on board, from which it might have been imagined, that she had blown up and foundered.

Such was the conclusion of Fazzello, but Montrano continued to gaze as if in expectation of her re-appearance, and in the course of twenty minutes, with the advantage of the height at which they stood, the black hull of a vessel making for Sicily might be discerned, far off on the gloomy bosom of the

deep. She was moving slowly, and toiling heavily with sweeps over the high and broken waters, like some vast struggling reptile that sought concealment amid the sunken rocks and dangerous eddies of that wild and dreaded shore.

CHAPTER III.

“ Our Laura’s Turk, still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, ‘ Madam,’ I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you’ll please to stay ;
Could staring win a woman this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray :
She had stood fire too long and well to boggle,
Even at this stranger’s most outlandish ogle.”

BEPPPO, A VENETIAN STORY.

AT some time previous to the event narrated at the close of the last chapter, and on the second evening after the departure of Ephraim for London, it so happened, that just as Mrs. Hagglestone had dismissed the tea-service, and the two young ladies had marshalled the board for a game of chess, that

that pattern of a lady's maid, the neat and jaunty little Deborah, informed her mistress, in a half whisper, that a "strange" gentleman requested an interview.

"I pray thee, child, be more explicit;—in what dost thou mean that he is 'strange?'"

"He is 'strange' in many ways, if you please, Ma'am."

"It doth not please me in any way, Deborah;—nevertheless, thou mayst inform him, that the Master is from home;—and that he is requested to communicate the matter of his thoughts, by letter, in the morning.—Dost thou understand?—Why doth the maiden loiter?"

But Deborah did loiter:—and still more provoking, she blushed and spoke not;—a single peep towards the door was however an ample apology. The circumspect Jemima looked the same way too, and there with eyes that seemed to analyze her soul and

body at a glance! stood the unknown intruder, leaning on a thick holly staff, and evidently possessed of that dare-all!—devil-may-care nonchalance, that no inhabitant of a petticoat was ever born to overawe.

The fair Quakeress felt the futility of any such vain-glorious attempt, with the instinctive readiness of her sex; and dismissing the look of offended delicacy, which had before darkened her beauty with a frown, she looked straight down her nose, with that apathetic, sleep-like passive endurance, that seems to defy misfortune by a sort of moral tortoise-shell of insensibility.—Now, we may observe, *en passant*, that our gentle friend, Jemima, had often felt the value of this negative kind of resistance—but now it availed her nothing, for she had not time to raise her eyes with that look of calm inquiry, with which she intended to become the assailant, before her rising resolution was routed

by a loud and smacking kiss, that closed upon her lips, with a most patriarchal and resistless unction.

Surprised beyond measure, but not knowing how far it might be 'judicious' to be absolutely offended, the retreating Jemima viewed the stranger with a scrutiny as searching as his own.

The personage before her was in the outward man a Quaker;—and one clothed in garments of a most outlandish cut and texture. To sketch him with a few touches, broad and brief;—fancy a wide-brimmed straw hat—yes, one of extreme amplitude, and shading a countenance full of a keen intelligence, and almost of an olive brown. A straight cut coat of a light drab fustian; a flapped waistcoat, with breeches and leggings, *en suite*,—each garment all loose and wrinkled, as if the form they covered was sun-shrunk from beneath them. Add to these, white cotton gloves, and the sturdy staff before

mentioned, and you have before you the externals of a Quaker newly imported from the back-woods of America.

“Sister, may the commendation of the Elders rest on thee and thine!—Verily, our brother Ephraim hath been wise in his generation, to cull so sweet a floweret as thyself. Thou art blooming, yea,—I do affirm it, as the rose of Sharon; and these young damsels too, stand as sister buds, in their virgin sweetness at thy side!—Verily,—the ‘kiss of peace’ shall no less be vouchsafed unto them:—yea!—for my heart yearneth with the bonds of a lawful affection:—nay, do they refuse!—Then will I ‘constrain,’ for is it not written, that ‘women’ should be ‘obedient’—and, “from him that asketh, turn not thou aside?”

Very properly offended at the misapplication of the scriptural passage, and somewhat suspicious, that the salutation so liberally bestowed, was in each instance more warm

than apostolic, the discreet Mrs. Hagglesstone had just drawn in a deep breath, to give the greater emphasis to her intended rebuke, when she was again interrupted by her transatlantic visitor.

“I pray thee, be not troubled,—I doubt not of the cordiality of thy welcome; no, verily,—and to show the ‘reciprocality’ of mine own feelings, I will deport myself as if altogether in mine own habitation,—yea, and take a seat even here at thy side, sister Hagglesstone.

“As thou mayst perceive, I am but just arrived from beyond sea; yet, thou wilt be delighted to learn, that in the interval, short as it hath been since my landing at the port of London, I have met with mine ‘old companion,’ thy worthy husband!—Sweet, let me tell thee, were the communings of our spirits concerning the days that are long past; when we were both,—thou must know, overmuch beset with youthful temptations:—

exceedingly too, was I interested as to all the particulars of his espousals.”—Poor Jemima blushed, and looked aside.

“Verily, thy cheeks are as blooming as the blossoms of the spring;—mine old familiar friend hath found a treasure!—yea, hath he, sweeter than honey or the honey comb!”—The blushes of poor Jemima grew still deeper.

“Come, come, I do aver, that thou art modest overmuch!—we will change the subject.—I have something to communicate, dost thou know;—something particular for thy *private* ear;—that is, so soon as these fair maidens will kindly vouchsafe an opportunity.”

To Jemima’s mortification and infinite surprise, all her dumb-show to the contrary was lost on Carema, and equally on Madalena, as both slipt silently from the room at the stranger’s first hint.

“Yea, he hath told me of the one

who is as a stray lambkin in thy fold; and behold, it is even she, of whom I would speak. Thy husband hath had a new light on the subject of her departure; and, dost thou know, that he is now minded, that she should forthwith embark:—yea, at once!—for he hath learnt that a Sicilian vessel even now offereth a convenience for the voyage.

“I have business also in that land of vanities, that men call ‘the garden of the world,’—and to satisfy thy husband’s mind, I will proceed thither direct, so that the young maid may have all suitable protection while among strangers, and sailing on the bosom of the deep waters.

“Now, in obedience to this, thy husband’s wish, it will be well for thee to be sudden in preparation:—we should be ready! for, as thou hearest, the sailing of the ship may be speedy.”

“Surely there will be time for me to

write to London,—and to learn my dear Ephraim's own thoughts, 'under his own hand,'—I shall need that testimony; and—"

"Doubtless it will be well to write."—A momentary smile hovered on the stranger's lip.

"Yea, it will be well,—very well;—but still thou must not delay to prepare:—I perceive that Carema Darnley is walking on the lawn without, and I will myself instruct her as to 'thy' determination."

To the doubting, half-frightened Jemima, this was indeed *mal en pis*,—but before she could in any way prevent it, the stranger had strode over the low window-sill, and the mischief, if such it was to prove, was fully accomplished.

At a farther interview, the efforts of Mrs. Hagglesstone to investigate the character of her self-obtruded visitor, were strangely met with a most provoking candour!—He gave her his name, and then described his avocations, both in the new world and in

the old, with an endless prolixity of detail, that really seemed too dull to be any thing but true.

In the mean time, the preparations of Carema and of Madalena were so promptly made, that their departure, even within a few hours, might have been accomplished; and the letter of Mrs. Hagglegstone to her spouse in town was said by both to be a most unnecessary precaution.

Having thus thrown all parties on the *qui vive* at the cottage, the stranger sauntered through the streets of Bristol, apparently regardless of the ridicule that the quaintness of his Pennsylvanian garb excited;—indeed, his large green goggles, *alias* spectacles, were scarcely ever turned to the right or to the left, and no man could be said to follow his nose with a more dogged and self-absorbed pertinacity. At length his walk ending in a blind alley, brought him to the door of one of those low Pot-houses,—that not all the Temperance

Societies in Christendom will ever eradicate from our sea-ports.

Of all boozing snuggeries, the Leathern Jack was the favorite resort of the confirmed tipplers. Out of sight, sly, and quiet, it had all the qualities that such gentlemen covet; and, if not sorely slandered, it presented facilities, equally seductive, to spirits of a bolder stamp; and for whose convenience, it was whispered, that the cellars had been barricadoed,—and a new door-way cut through the back wall on the other side of the premises; so that those who had no particular desire to face an unexpected visitor might slip out of the way unnoticed.

On the whole, it was certainly a singular choice for so ‘serious’ a character as a Quaker, and the little simpering slattern of a bar-maid thought so too,—as, in her surprise, she forgot the accustomed leer as he passed her at the engine. The lower apartment, blackened, and still reeking with the smoke

of tobacco, presented a strange medley in the groups of foreign sailors and rough artisans with which it was crowded. Drinking, quarrelling, singing, and vociferating, in all the confusion of a second Babel, the noise they made might have stunned old Vulcan at his forge ! but they caught not a glance from the stranger, who passed onward through a dark passage with what might seem an odd and somewhat suspicious familiarity with the place.

Having ascended the creaking and rat-gnawed stairs at the farther end, he kicked open the door of "The Oaken Chamber," as the chief room of the house was called, and threw himself *sans ceremonie* into the large padded chair which, on high occasions, was assigned to the spokesman of a meeting or the president of a club.

Hitherto, we must observe, that he had been silently followed by the landlord, one of those sharp-nosed, round, bull-headed,

little forward fellows, whom it would be a luxury to kick, were they worth the trouble,—and who now viewed his solemn guest with the malicious impatience of a hungry wolf.

“Ah! Timothy Tomkins, I know thee of old!—Thou art a publican and a sinner!”

The fellow started and stared as one awakened from a dream. It was very strange, but the voice seemed as familiar and well known,—as the person of the speaker was the reverse.

“I tell thee, Tomkins, that thy backslidings, thy tricks, and thy knaveries, may bring thee into trouble unawares.”

Timothy scratched his head with a doleful consciousness, for he had himself too, often thought the very same thing.

“Yea! Timothy;—therefore get thee gone, and inform the Turkish man whom I noticed to be sleeping in a chair in the bar below, that a friend awaits him here.”

The order was obeyed, though reluctantly; and still more reluctant was Timothy to withdraw on his return with the person described: indeed, accustomed as he was to odd-and-sundry eccentricities of circumstance and of person, the present affair was more mysterious than he liked. The Quaker's voice, too, still thrilled on his nerves like a stroke of electricity;—it seemed as something, that he had an instinct both to obey and fear,—and he cursed the creaking stairs on his descent, as their lack of sound would have betrayed him had he paused to listen.

“ Well, Sir, we meet again ;” said the supposed Quaker, as taking off his *chapeau de paille*, with the fictitious gray locks appended to the inside of its brim, he pitched it to the other end of the apartment, and after a hearty laugh, re-seated himself in the chair of state.

“ We will order a stoup of wine ; but

first let me congratulate you on your safe passage through the streets; you are now out of danger, or nearly so. My own masquerading, too, has been most successful. I will rely on this disguise, Sir, let the emergency be what it may.—Faith, it is so complete, that even our roguish host, old Timothy, whom I have known far longer than I could have wished, was utterly at fault.

“Another day, and all will be well; but, in the mean time, there is a little matter to be attended to, and which happens to be so amusing, that I am sorry that the peril and the honour must be all my own.—Would you believe it, Sir; I shall elope with a lady, to whom I am in every sense a stranger, of hardly two hours’ acquaintance, and, of course, with her own consent?”

“I have seen too many of your marvels to doubt of your success, Captain Anselmo; but permit me to say, that I am half

afraid that I have followed your advice too far for my own:—the fact of my having kept out of the way of the warrant that has been issued so long, may be construed as a proof of guilt, and tell awkwardly another day:—I am half inclined to dare their malice, and surrender.”

“If you do, pray take a halter ready spliced in your pocket; for your execution would be as certain as your present existence.—No! Sir;—your only chance for hope or life,—is to get out of the kingdom quietly and quickly!—Thank Heaven, we shall both of us have a chance to-morrow.”

“But the Lady, Captain;—I hope that the enterprise you speak of is as it should be, all ‘honourable’ and ‘fair?’”

“‘Fair’ and ‘honourable’ are high and sounding words, Sir; but, as the world wags, unfortunately they are little more than sound.—He who woos a woman, must too often play false to win her;—the gay little darlings

are cheated into wedlock, as goldfinches are lured into cages,—when themselves grown giddy with the hope of pleasure.”

“ Society affects to consider it necessary that woman should be kept in a blissful ignorance of all the asperities and rougher stains of humanity, and yet it expects her to combat and to triumph over difficulties and dangers, that only an enlarged and solid knowledge can arm her to resist.—The hypocrisy and insincerity, on the one side and on the other, are but the natural products of the first deceit; and it is hard to say, if the assumed softness and insipid frivolity which are deemed the only incense fit to offer in a lady’s *boudoir*, are the more debasing to the one sex than contemptuous of the other. A woman becomes the bartered toy of fashion;—and the mask of a ‘false seeming delicacy,’ imposed on all that would approach her, so effectually represses the frank and rapturous fervour of a manly passion, that the heart-

less fopling,—the sordid fortune-hunter,—and the real lover,—stand but an equal chance. Taught to repress all natural impulse, and unable to penetrate the veil of deceit spread out before her,—she chooses, as caprice or the interested views of those around her may teach them to dictate; and she is expected to ‘honour and obey’ the man,—whom it may be ‘impossible’ to love, or even to respect.”

“‘Let the galled jade wince!’—you speak so feelingly, that one would fancy, Captain, that you speak *experimentally*, and have been deucedly jilted by some bright Cynosure of courtly eyes. But, after all, is not this Fashion,—bugbear or idol, call it which you will, innocent of half the mischief charged upon it?—By making simpletons conspicuous, it renders them amusing; and really, if people lack sense, any guide is better than none:—the time is come, or near at hand, when Supremacy of Mind will fear no trea-

son from the tinselled stalking-horse of men-milliners, tailors, and dancing-masters. 'Fashion,'—faugh!—But, after all, Captain, how bears this digression on the point at issue?"

"No farther than that it may apologize for the little deceit to which I have become a party:—really, the girl is so divine a creature, that it seems a sacrilege to 'cheat her,' even into happiness:—and then the chance of the reverse!"

"I fear, Captain, there is more of mischief in this mystery than you infer. Positively, the love of Desdemona for the Moor was not half so strange as the toleration of any thing feminine for such a quaint monstrosity as your yankee garb presents."

"I can but imagine the amusement of Carema Darnley, if she had but caught a glimpse of such an upright rhinoceros;—it were enough to charm the Fates from their purpose, and win Melpomene to smiles!"

“ These poetical heroics are sadly thrown away, Sir !—Miss Darnley is too much interested in the well being of your humble servant, to exhibit the levity you speak of.”

“ What say you, my good Sir, when I affirm that she will be with me far away, and rocked by the briny billows, within forty-eight hours at the most.”

“ Impossible !” — said Blandford, half choked with the sickening emotion that chilled his heart at the mere idea of such a consummation.

“ Impossible !”

“ Nay, you shall witness the miracle, if you will ! and, what is more, you shall assist in its fulfilment.”

A moment’s reflection had enabled Blandford to restrain the indignation that flashed upon his mind ; so far, at least, as to prevent its being noticed by his companion ;—and a few leading questions, cautiously advanced, soon so far unfolded the subject,

as to show him that Anselmo was merely acting the part of an agent in the affair ; but the information that followed was of a nature to excite feelings of alarm far beyond his former fears.

In speaking of the Count Montrano, the Italian had sketched the outlines of his character with a vague and guarded delicacy, that seemed to imply a degree of mental reservation that filled Blandford with a thousand dark suspicions. The idea too, that she, the lovely idol of his hopes ; the fair enchantress,—of whom his passion was half a worship ! so chastened was it with that tenderness, that even fears its own expression may offend,—his loved, and as yet unwooed Carema !—That she, still fresh in the un-sunned charms of opening womanhood,—whose beauty ripened into blushes with a look, and before whom his swelling heart had ventured not a sigh ;—that she should fall into the snare of one so wild

and doubtful as Anselmo!—the thought was little short of madness.

With these imaginations crowding on his mind, although Blandford remained sufficiently himself, to avoid any hasty expression that might have betrayed the uneasiness that gnawed within, yet his cheek blanched, and his lip quivered; until, at length, to escape the scrutiny which he felt he could no longer meet with safety, he feigned fatigue, and, pillowing his head with his arm, affected to sink into a sleep.

He had not been long thus, before Anselmo, whom a fugitive life had rendered but too familiar with such impositions, approached his side, exclaiming, in a tone of ill-suppressed anger,—

“Is it thus, Sir,—that you would meanly impose on the man who has periled his life to serve you?—Your emotion was before self-evident,—it passed unquestioned; but

permit me to say, that your anxiety to hide it must of necessity arise from either shame or fear!—and perhaps you will honour me by saying for which of the two you would take credit of your friends.”

“ Fear !” — repeated Blandford, starting from his seat, and with a look of fierce defiance,—

“ Fear !”—but in a moment after, as the cause of his uneasiness recurred to his memory, he dropped his glance upon the ground, while, in an altered tone, he added,—

“ Fear !—yes, you speak too truly,—my heart is aching with fear; but it is the fear that honour and affection warrant,—the fear that seals the fealty of love.”

“ Love !” exclaimed Anselmo, in evident surprise. — “ What, is it possible that you love Miss Darnley !” The countenance of the Italian changed, and, with a smile of generous warmth, he had advanced with

open hand towards Frank, as one about to confer a favour, when stopping short, he added,—

“ I judge too hastily ;—your passion, perhaps, is not as yet declared ? ”

“ No, not declared : ”—responded Blandford, with a misgiving consciousness,—
“ but ”—

“ Sir ! — interrupted the Italian,—“ in ‘ love ’ and ‘ war,’ men trust to destiny :—had you declared, and been accepted, I would have recognized your right to interfere ; but as it is, Miss Darnley ‘ is,’ and shall be, ‘ free ’ as the birds of heaven ! In forwarding the views of Count Montrano, who has a claim to her obedience, I stand unimpeached ; and permit me to observe, that, were the case more doubtful, still has the Count with me a friend’s strong right of aid, which it were difficult to disappoint ;—yes, even if a stronger duty called,

As it may give you pain, Mr. Blandford, I grieve; but still Miss Darnley must embark, and you must throw your hopes upon the future."

"Not while I hold the present:"—and, stepping forward, he confronted the Italian.

"No, Anselmo!—we stand as children, hand in hand, upon the ledge of some wild precipice!—if either falters, both are lost!—You stir not from the spot, save in my company;—attempt to elude me, and I will at once surrender to the authorities, and by impeaching you, render Carema 'safe:'—let a prison and death be the portion of us both, I care not!"

"Those who, like me, have seen much of the first, are seldom found to fear the second:"—said Anselmo, drily;—

"But, methinks your threat implies a personal restraint, that must depend on force,—if so, I warn you, that the trial will be futile."

“No!—not if the open air may witness the issue!”—said Blandford, moving hastily towards the door; Anselmo as quickly barred the passage, but, as he seemed to be unarmed, Frank closed upon him, and, having the advantage of youth and muscle, might have forced the way, but that the Italian drew a thin stiletto, the sheath of which was so concealed in the sleeve of his coat, as to have escaped observation, and menaced him with instant death, in a whisper so calm and icy in its tone, that Frank let go his hold, and stood irresolute.

It was but for an instant;—at the next, he had hurled the large and heavy chair we have previously mentioned at his adversary, with so much force, that it was shivered into pieces with the concussion. Frank knew no more; for, pitching forward at the moment of the effort, he lay stunned with the fall, or, perchance, by some blow dealt in return, he

knew not which ; for, during the insensibility that followed, he had been removed, and, on awaking, found himself in a place so totally different from that of the late encounter, that the whole seemed but as a dream.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Hear you, Sir ;
What is the reason that you use me thus ?
I loved you ever ;—but it is no matter :
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, the dog will have his day.”

HAMLET.

If the past incident seemed to Frank but the memory of a dream, the objects that saluted his opening eyes had been brave furniture for a fresh one.

He found himself stretched out on a large and handsome bed, which occupied the chamber in which it stood, as completely as one

pill-box fills another in a set. Small as it was, the room was on every side, corner, and cranny, over-stocked with those peculiar articles that feminine taste would dictate, supposing the lady to have a better knowledge of the 'substantials,' than of the elegancies of life. A bottle of cherry brandy on the dressing-table, and a glass yet moist with the cordial itself, gave evidence too, that be she who she might, she was sufficiently 'practical' upon occasion:—but more than these, a basket of baby-linen, with other of those little 'preparatory' matters, which are deemed essentials on events of the deepest domestic interest—excited the curiosity of Frank to the extent of perplexity.

Where was he?—and above all, why was he thus obtruded on the privacy of one who might so soon, so suddenly, have occasion to eject him? The appearance of every object, to the coals and dry shavings in the stove, gave notice that all was on

the very tiptoe of expectation!—and yet he remained, hour after hour, unvisited, and as the door was locked, he doubted not a prisoner. Of windows there were none, and beyond the sky-light grinned an iron grating, that forbad all chance of egress.

Frank had been so long the tennis-ball of Fortune, that he needed little self-schooling to make a virtue of necessity;—and thus finding his headache increased to giddiness, on any attempt to rise, he took the matter easy, lay quiet as a dormouse, and strove to sleep, with something like a vision still flitting between the curtains, of a very lovely woman, who sipped the cherry bounce as the Israelites their manna, and smiling as she sipped, still looked unutterable things.

“A Turk!—O mercy o’ me!—I shall never fancy the bed again!—Just think of that, Mr. Tomkins.”

This was said in a tone half coaxing, half in anger.

“And then only just to suppose,”—

“Hush, Love!—we’ll *suppose* ‘just’ nothing of the matter:—Turk, or Christian, all’s the same!—then, as the parson says, ‘all flesh is grass,’—and for the matter of that, he’ll lay out as handsome a corpse as needs be.—Is old Jewdeth ready for the job?”

The answer was a sigh,—and a sentimental whisper, not quite so audible; but Frank caught enough to learn, that he was considered either dead already, or in a fair way to be so, *sans doute*, and without delay.

“Oh! I’d see the Captain stark as a skinned eel in a cold pasty! before I’d be palavered over to bear the onus of his odd tricks after this fashion, Mr. Tomkins!—To think that nothing must serve the turn, but my best feather bed, and bridal chamber!”

“Hush, Love! don’t you consider that the Captain has been the very making of

the house!—the room, as you know, is the only private place we have:—and then, the Captain's not to be trifled with; besides, I'm half afraid that he has a three-quarter guess of our part with Smuggleton, in 'peaching on the Blowzy Bess.'

“Ha! you'll find after all, as I said, Mr. Tomkins, that you should have laid the Captain by the heels when you had the chance. One of these days, he will just leave you to dance the 'single-cord horn-pipe' without the footing, take my word for that!—Now tell me, if you can, what is to be done with this same 'gentleman Turk,'—if so be that he comes about?”—eh, Mr. Tomkins?—tell me that!”

“What!—why—*keep him out of sight, safe, and quiet*:”—so said the Captain, looking all the while as black as thunder,—either with grief or passion;—ay, with rage, no doubt; for what grief could he have for a Turk who had tried to brain him as a

butcher fells an ox?—"Out of sight, *safe*, and *quiet*."

"Oh yes, I understand,—‘dead men tell no tales.’ His Turkship has had his dose, as I imagine, sure enough:—but only let the house get clear of company, and I’ll have a closer look at him yet,—and then, if he should have recovered strength, so as to kick up a rumpus!"—

"Ah! and what then, Mr. Tomkins?" interrupted the wife, with an eagerness that evinced more humanity than might have been expected.

"Why,—speak lower:—I’ll turn the key and keep him there!—Bless your innocent little heart,—why, what’s the matter now?"

The hollow laugh that followed, sounded on the ear of Frank deathly as a knell:—it betrayed the atrocious purpose of the wretch but too clearly.

Fortunately, with the cold shudder of

the moment, Blandford found that the previous vertigo had departed ; and he resolved to exert every faculty to effect his escape, all hopeless as it seemed. The only chance as he thought, would be to encounter Tomkins on his approach ; but then the consciousness of his own weakness, and that his jailer would be armed, rendered this last hope faint and desperate.

All now had long been silent ; and as exhausted nature craved sustenance, Frank made free with a glass of the cordial. In doing this, he chanced to observe some jars of preserves on a shelf at hand, and the crimson contents of one of these suggested a thought which he put in instant execution.

“ Yes,”—said Frank to himself,—“ the murderous villain shall have ocular demonstration of all he wishes :”—and as he noticed his own pale and cadaverous aspect, as reflected in the mirror, he added ;—“ Faith !

this unlucky blow, and the long fasting before-hand, have made me already but the 'shadow' of a man! The counterfeit, I see, would bear a closer scrutiny than it is likely to obtain:—he will hardly lock the door upon a corpse, and if he does, my resurrection would sufficiently appal him:—thank heaven, I have at least a chance."

Thus saying, Frank, having thrown open his vest, smeared over the lower part of his neck and breast with the contents of the jar,—so as to give the appearance of as horrible a gash as ever a Coroner was called to witness. His next care was to place himself in a disordered attitude on the bed, where he lay on his back, with his head depending over on one side;—and as he had also given the sheet the appearance of being deeply stained with gore,—the whole scene bore the aspect of a suicide of the most determined and revolting nature.

"The love of life will make us do

strange things,"—thought Frank, as, on hearing an approaching step, he allowed his neck to stretch painfully backwards, and fixed his half-closed eyes with the vacancy of death.

The door opened,—and at the moment a long, wild shriek, followed by a heavy fall, gave Frank a hint that it was time to commence the second act of the drama,—and in the next instant he had rolled off the bed, and was upon his feet.

On rushing to the passage, he had to stagger over the prostrate form of poor Mrs. Tomkins, who, fearful of her husband's inhuman purpose, and anxious to avert it, had determined to forestall his visit,—and had unfortunately swooned at the first glance of the supposed victim.

Any idea of giving the good woman assistance, much as he might have desired it, was out of the question,—and Frank dashed onward. The passage was long, dark,

and narrow,—but it was almost passed, and the fugitive had caught a glimpse of the light at the farther end, when all at once he heard steps from behind; and snorting with rage and want of breath, like an over-driven bullock, the remorseless Tomkins came thundering at his heels.

Misled by a sudden turn, Frank was just in the enemy's grasp, when the renewed cries of his wife caught on the fellow's ear,—and seized with a new alarm, he faltered, and, as the screams redoubled, fled to her relief.

On this accident hung Blandford's safety;—he felt it,—and bounding forward with redoubled speed, passed the back door, and found himself at once in a bye-street, in a dusky evening, at freedom,—if not in safety.

The lamps were already lighted, and as Blandford hurried on the fresh air revived him,—his spirits rose, and he again felt himself re-nerved for the struggle that might

remain. His first idea was to seek Carema ; but the alarm he might create deterred him : —there was, too, on second thoughts, another expedient, and one that might be quite as much for her advantage,—a call on Dr. M'Mara ; and thither he resolved to hasten.

Easy of access to all,—and particularly so to foreigners,—the strange gibberish that Blandford deemed it prudent to utter, as he addressed the Doctor's servant, passed readily,—and he was immediately described in pompous terms to the Doctor, as 'a learned Persian,'—and as instantly admitted to an audience.

Anxious to preserve appearances until they were alone, Blandford made a profound salaam on the threshold of the study. The Doctor returned the courtesy with a bow of equal respect ; but, as the latter raised his head, and caught a glance of the common, sailor-like cut of the stranger's costume, his lip curled and his eye twinkled ;—this was

noticed by Frank, who fearing that the bubble might burst prematurely, put his finger to his lip as a token of secrecy, while, with a significant glance at the servant, he pointed to the door. The Doctor caught the intended meaning,—the servant withdrew,—and, with a second bow, he awaited the explanation of his visitor.

How great was his surprise at the discovery that ensued:—but to Blandford's infinite disappointment and chagrin, the expression of joy that at first lightened over the fine countenance of M'Mara, as immediately faded; and the air of self-restraint, if not of absolute irritation, that succeeded, excited feelings of painful anxiety, with something, perchance, of indignation; yes, for it requires no little philosophy to bear the accusation we do not deserve; and still more, if we find ourselves prejudged without a hearing.

These emotions were however lost in

those of genuine sorrow, as the Doctor communicated the painful intelligence of Carema's departure — attended as it had been, by circumstances of fearful solicitude and mystery.

It grieved Blandford too, to hear that his good friend, Ephraim, had fallen into a state of nervous excitement from the shock :—and still more was he pained to find, that no 'pursuit' had as yet been instituted :—nor had it indeed been deemed probable, that the vessel could be intercepted on her passage :—and Miss Darnley once landed in Italy, and in the power of Montrano !—was, as the Doctor said, mournfully, and while the tears started to his eyes—"Lost beyond the hope of rescue."

"If my life may avail to serve her !"

"Life, Sir, minus 'cash' in the cause of love, would prove but a cypher !"

So, replied the Doctor, with a caustic dryness, that stung Blandford to the quick.

The emotion was strong but transient, for, as the exigencies of his forlorn condition recurred to his mind, the idle hope of serving Carema vanished,—and covering his face with his hands, Frank sought the window—in the tears and the confusion of despair.

M'Mara was affected,—deeply affected ;—but still the suspicions he entertained of Frank's 'integrity' prevented the reply that his heart would have dictated, and he was silent.

“ I may not have the power to rescue, but if I live,—I will avenge her ! ”—said Frank, recovering himself, and fixing his eyes with a mournful expression of reproach on his alienated friend.

“ I understand you, Sir,” replied the Doctor ;—“ in calculating the ‘ dues of friendship,’ you have forgotten to estimate ‘ yourself : ’—We are all but too ready to overlook our own demerit :—and I forgive, heartily forgive

your injustice :—nay, more, Sir !—condemning your crimes and follies, still I pity your misfortunes ; and my poor means of service, such as they are, await your acceptance.—This note for fifty pounds,—and if you please, a second.”

“ Crimes ! and follies ! ”—muttered Blandford, in a hollow voice, as if in the delirium of a fever.

“ Crimes and follies—Good God ! is it possible, that the charge of Kenrick, false as the wretch who made it—that such an absurdity can be believed by any person whom I once have known ?—and if by ‘ you ’—then, doubtless, by Carema ! ”——

“ No ! no !—said the Doctor, hastily— I speak my own sentiments, because I abhor insincerity, and would not be misconstrued : —Carema judges for herself ; and in thinking the reverse, against all evidence ;—she has, I must say, shown a sad perversity,—a wilfulness in prejudice.”

“ She has judged the truth in the strength, —and in the purity of her own clear sense and honour; yes,—and may the Angels of the God she serves—environ her with blessings !”

Blandford had spoken in a proud enthusiasm, and the Doctor was moved, puzzled—but not convinced. There might have been, as he thought to himself, some exaggeration, but still he considered that his former friend was but too culpable;—yes, even to the amount of guilt!—Yet, in the kindness and generosity of his nature, M'Mara repeated his offers of service with all earnestness, and in a tone of touching humility.

“ No, Sir,” —exclaimed Blandford, his cheek flushed to a deep crimson with contending emotions.

“ No, Sir; did I possess your esteem!—your assistance were as precious as water to the lips of Dives!—My spirit burns to follow her I love—and could I coin my very

blood into gold, I would shed it half—as freely as the clouds distil their dews!—But, no,—impeached, beggared, and hunted as a felon,—still I am not sunk so low, as to receive a ‘favour’ from the man who scorns—or, at the best, may pity me as one that it had been wisdom to have shunned.

Blandford re-adjusted his Turkish cap, and passed away without another word; nor did M'Mara attempt to restrain him: the matter had gone too far, and the excitement of both parties had left no room for those calm questions,—and that dispassionate train of reasoning, which alone could have dis-abused M'Mara of that pre-conceived opinion, which circumstantial evidence had stamped upon his mind.

With some perplexity at these indignant protestations, but unhappily far more annoyed by the soreness of wounded affection,—the Doctor resumed his studies in grief and anxiety, while the more unfortunate

Blandford wandered forth, he knew not whither,—an outlaw on his native soil, without a friend, and almost without a hope.

CHAPTER V.

“ His ordinary Rate of speech
In loftiness of sound was rich ;
A Babylonish Dialect,
Which learned Pedants much affect.
It was a parti-coloured dress
Of patch'd and pye-ball'd languages :
'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
Like fustian heretofore on satin.”

HUDIBRAS.

RECKLESS of the future, and become almost a misanthropist from this last and bitter disappointment, Blandford turned, with a feeling of disgust, from the dwellings of men ;

and, striking across the fields at random, came without intention on the track of a turnpike road. This was equally unknown, and yet he still pressed onward;—the very exercise of walking seemed to give a vent to the irritation of his mind, and the clouds of dust, and the roughness of the way, were disregarded.

If the cause of mental misery cannot be removed, nothing, it must be confessed, will counteract it sooner than physical pain; and thus a sudden fright will often dissipate a fit of melancholy sooner than a dose of laudanum! Poor Frank was now so moody, that it would have cost him little effort to have brained himself against a wall;—so far, at least, as ‘resolution’ was required; but never was a sulky schoolboy sooner tickled into obedience by the birch, than his woe-begone fantasies were routed by the frolicsome leader of a stage coach, which, dashing round a corner unawares,

struck Frank on the shoulder, and laid him flat on his back, within three inches of the wheel.

“ Helm hard a-weather, and belay !”—roared a jolly tar, in a voice of thunder, from the box.

The coach drew up just as Frank expected to hear the ‘ crepitation ’ (as the surgeons delicately term it) of his own ribs ; and his rough-looking friend aloft, having swung himself down, something after the fashion, and with the agility of a monkey, first turned him over with an action of the foot between a push and a kick, but perfectly in kindness,—and then, having assisted him to rise, and finished by a shake, to see that all was sound, he exclaimed,—

“ Douse my glims ! but you have had a near chance for staving your timbers this touch, my hearty !”

“ What’s the matter below, Tom ?”—said a gentleman from the coach window,

whom half a glance showed to be a naval officer.

“ Please your Honour, here’s a ‘ Turkey-man ’ just run down in the dark ; and he had foundered to a certainty, but that Coachee winched the wheel to a jam, and eased her cleverly off at the pinch.”

“ I trust that he is not hurt, then ? ” — said the officer.

“ No, your Honour ! — not a bolt started : — the running gear all taut. Plenty of beam and keel too, your Honour, and, by the cut of his jib, knows something of the sea.”

Both man and master, for Tom was the officer’s servant, viewed Frank from head to foot, as he stood in the glare of the sidelamp, as carefully as a Yorkshire jockey examines a horse ; and not without satisfaction either, to judge at least from the knowing wink that was exchanged.

“ Shall I mark the ‘ foreign craft ’ with the broad arrow ? ” — said Tom, alluding to

the stamp impressed on the King's stores in the navy.

"You may try the chance, so that you pull easy:—a muffled oar, Tom!" replied the Master, with a nod emphatic.

Doubtless he was understood.

"Hark ye, Cockswain!"—cried Tom to the coachman,—

"Bear a hand, the 'Turkish-man' joins company this cruise. Come, tumble up aloft, my hearty; here's a forecastle birth, all snug and ready."

Somewhat surprised, but not unwilling, Frank suffered himself to be assisted, alias hoisted, in Tom's nautical phraseology, to the top of the coach, where he took his seat in the front, with a woman to the right,—and a something cloaked up upon the left, which, judging from the size and redness of the nose, (the only feature visible), it was most charitable to suppose, to be of the 'masculine' gender.

“Where is the gemman bound for?”—said Coachee to the sailor.

“Any port in a storm,”—replied the latter:—“to judge from the trim of his upper works, there’s but little rhino in the locker! yet a guess of the matter’s not amiss, we’ll hail him for an answer:—I say, Monsere, what might you be arter when you ran your bowsprit in the mud?”

“Zinco—dalla—nill,”—said Frank, giving the sailor a look of eager intelligence, while he uttered this unmeaning gibberish, which had been coined on the moment, according to the advice of Anselmo, who had told him gravely, that the more senseless the jargon, the better the disguise,—as anything would pass for Turkish or Arabic in England.

“What does he mean?” inquired the Coachman.

“Humph!”—said Tom, pouching a fresh quid, and letting the last fly to leeward;—

in fact, unwilling to launch a ‘plump one,’ and equally averse to confess his ignorance:—and then taking out his over-loaded purse, and chinking it knowingly, he added,—

“Why, for that, what should he say,—but that he can’t tell the bearings of a strange land without the chart!—And, Lord love ye, ’twas just the same with me in the Indies!—deuce the name of any place could I remember,—but then I’d think of the gals that lived here, and there, and anywhere:—so the one I calls ‘Port Sall,’—t’other, ‘Port Bess,’—‘Poll,’ or what it might be.”

“Oh, Sir! you knows foreign parts!”—said the female at his rear, in a tone of admiration, while her eyes glistened at the purse, as a cat’s upon a bird.

“Ay, darling dear, ye may say that;—but then I knows home parts too, and likes ’um best.”

“Doubtless these have travelled much,
Natura hominum est avida novitatis ; I

will glean of their experience:”—and with these words, the cowl of the cloak was thrown back just far enough to show a pair of lack-lustre eyes as deeply seated as the nose was prominent.

“My friend, I am a teacher of youth, and yet still would I be a recipient of knowledge. Your answer to this Mariner, though in a tongue with even the rudiments of which I can boast no familiarity, is a proof indirect, that, though you speak it not,—yet again, that you are not ignorant of the vernacular idiom of this land,—*Utere dum est ætate*:—I would indeed ‘use’ the time, learned Sir. Now, there are questions touching the Lower Empire, and of Constantinople, of which—”

During this harangue, the eyes of the Coachman had wandered from his horses to the speaker, with that thoughtless gaping wonder, that the twang of Latin fails not to excite from the vulgar. Indeed, the

shrewdness of the latter is often at fault to account for the union of folly and knowledge in the same person ; for while to speak the language of Tully is with them synonymous with wisdom, the practice is rather a trait of imbecility,—and, as they know not this, the incongruity puts their faculties on the stretch of perplexity.

Now it unfortunately happened, that, while Jehu's senses were thus unduly on the 'strain,' the reins he held were in the same predicament ; this the scholar had just wit enough to note, and, excited by the danger, he shouted loudly,—

“ Jam tempus solvere spumantia colla equum ! ”

But instead of “ loosing the foaming necks of the horses,” as thus directed, the coachman, amused by the vehemence of the speaker, still eyed him askance, and held the harder. The off leader bolted,—a trace snapped,—the coach swerved from the road,

canted off a bank, and, with a heavy lurch, fell souse into a pond.

In contradiction to the usual fate of passengers on such occasions, the 'out' fared better than the 'insides:'—the former suffered nothing but a ducking, while the latter, boxed up in the coach, which was half under, and full of water, were like so many cod in the well of a fishing smack, save and except, in the article of 'drowning,' in which the human 'loose-fish' had all the disadvantage on their own side.

"*Væ misero mihi!*—woe to me, miserable man," cried the Dominie, who had suffered comparatively 'nothing,' having fallen at the edge of the pond, and scrambled out immediately.

"*Prô dolor!*—oh the anguish!—my 'cloak,' my 'cloak!'—ah me! the inside is as wet as the out:—*Prô hominum fidem!*—alas, the help of men!"—and, wringing his hands, he stood as one demented, though

totally regardless of all misfortunes but his own.

“Avast, messmate :—hark’ee, where’s the bit of a woman?”

Having thus hollowed in his ear, Tom pressed the water from his own shaggy locks, and, blowing like a grampus, looked around.

“Zounds! she has foundered in the mud hull-deep, man; and settled a-head, with two white buoys stern-way, to mark her bearings.”

“Yes, I see,—I can discern that the damsel is in jeopardy,”—quoth the linguist,—“though, indeed, I can only behold *crurum tenus*, as far as the legs.”

“And far enough too, you old rogue, eh!—Come, here goes; I’ll have her afloat and baled in a jiffy.”

Thus saying, Tom, having tipped the Dominie a kick on the breech in very contempt, took the water like a spaniel, and

soon realized his promise. All, however, was not so easily accomplished :—in doing one thing, we often overlook another, and thus Tom forgot his master.

Now Captain Crant was possessed of as much *sang froid* as any man in the Navy, but circumstances are beyond control, and ‘courage’ without ‘chance’ availeth little ! It had so happened, that when the coach was swamped, the Captain was on the wrong side ;—the other passengers were a Dancing Master and a Quakeress ;—and though by a slight effort as the vehicle capsized, he could have pushed the latter aside, and superseded the former, in a chance for the window, yet he disdained an advantage offered rather by ‘strength’ than ‘honour,’ and remained as steady as a stock-fish.

Not so the man of ‘pumps,’ whose gallantry, perchance, had never mounted higher than his toes. At the first splash, he thrust his upper half through the open window,—

leaving the lady to struggle as she might; the coach all the while settling deeper, and the ascending water gurgling up within it.

‘Raising the wind’ is well known to be a substantial pleasure on occasion;—but this ‘rising of the waters’ told quite the other way. The lady, a sweet girl of nineteen, screamed in an agony of fear, as she felt the fast encroaching, and icy fluid gathering round her; and with quite sufficient reason, for the Dancing Master had got his body completely jammed in the window frame. Dear little soul, her cries were soon silenced as the bubbling waters closed above her lips.

Poor Crant too, who had so nobly awaited his turn, astounded by the delay, suddenly submerged, and almost drowning in the utter darkness, had got his head he knew not how,—but completely in chancery with the Dancing Master’s feet and the lady’s petticoats. The convulsive efforts of struggling nature were horrible,—his fate seemed

certain; still however, being a capital diver, he kept his senses until he felt something else!—a hand clutching the hair of his head, and drawing him upwards!—a moment more, and he was above the surface of the water, exhausted to faintness, but safe in the grasp of the quondam ‘Turk’ alias Frank, who had forced open the door, plunged head foremost into the coach, and dragged him from the bottom.

Now, of all moments, emphatically so called,—your ‘golden,’ your ‘trying,’ or your ‘melting,’—none are equal to your ‘*drowning*,’ for that intensity of feeling that puts the world in a nut-shell,—an eternity in a moment! Any man who has had any experience of the matter would barter half a life to avoid them;—Crant had known ‘these,’ and he therefore felt no common gratitude to have been rescued, and that, as he was conscious, with much personal risk to his preserver. The expres-

sion of his thanks was indeed so ardent, that Frank, fearing that the emotion might be injurious, and forgetful of his assumed character, cautioned him, in the ‘King’s best English,’ to be silent.

The Dancing Master and the lady, who had previously owed their safety to the same arm, were not remiss in the due acknowledgments; the first bowing with the grace of an Apollo, and the latter quite *charmante* in the modest fervour of her manner, and the rich melody of her voice.

“Ah! Miss,”—said the Dominie, who was still shaking the water from his cloak, —*suave rubino* sweetly blushing,—“Yes, I do remember me, that Hippocrates doth much commend the cold bath, *cella frigidaria*, for the female;—of a truth he was right, for it hath given a deeper glow and freshness to the rose.”

“What will your Honour order consarning getting under weigh with the old craft?—

she's none the worse, — never started a splinter,—and took the bottom as easy as a pig rolls in the litter?"

"Ask the Coachman."

"He's only 'half pumped,' your Honour, and can't muster breath for a whistle."

Tom was quite correct; for sure enough, the knight of the lash, who had laid in a 'heavy wet' of purl before his souse, was still on his knees in dolesome plight, and vomiting water like a parish engine! Time, however, which worketh great marvels, set all these matters right. With the assistance of some country people, who had dragged it from the pond, the coach, its man, and horses were soon ready to take the road.

The young lady, from a delicacy, the cause of which may be left to fancy, chose to remain at a farm-house hard by, to await another conveyance; and the Dancing Master, who declared most pathetically that a touch of the 'rheumatism' might blast his bloom-

ing honour and spoil his fortune, most magnanimously gave 'sixpence' to a ploughboy to guide him to the nearest inn,—where a warm bed and buttered ale rescued at once his reputation and his life.

Meanwhile the Coachman mounted his box, and sat alone in his glory with the gravity of an undertaker. The Dominie, too, quite in flogging spirits, from the exhilarating influence of a dram from Tom's canteen, doubtless given as some amends for the kick *par derrière*, after a rhetorical flourish in which he compared Coachee's mishap to that of Phæton with the broken-down car of Apollo, clambered up on the front: Tom did the same, handing up the simpering fair one who had taken root topsy-turvy in the mud, and whom he had so tenderly transplanted, that no other loss had ensued than that of her bonnet, which still remained at the bottom of the pond as a play-thing for diving ducklings. Tom's gallantry was still

in requisition ; and perching the fair one on his knee, he did all he could to equalize the remaining caloric between them, on principles most economical and philosophical.

The inside of the coach was so wet, cold, and comfortless, that the Captain and Frank, with each a wisp of straw in lieu of cushions, took seats at the back outside ; where they had, at least, a fair chance of drying themselves in the ‘wind ;’—and all were again in motion.

They were far from the scene of the late disaster, when the Captain, addressing Frank, for both had hitherto felt too uncomfortable to speak, said in a tone grown almost cheerful :—

“ My dear Sir,—after what has passed, I trust that it is needless for me to say that I am most anxious to repay the debt of gratitude I owe :— Now it is evident that you are in disguise ; and as no man wears a mask without a purpose, show me

your wish, and depend upon my best assistance. Nay, do not hesitate; for we know not how many unpleasant accidents are stumbled on in ignorance.—Not two hours ago, I myself, at the suggestion of my old Cockswain, Tom Kealson, had consented to your being trepanned to serve his Majesty on board my own ship the Falcon,—as smart a frigate, by the bye, Sir, as a man need lay to the wind. You will pardon me; the idea of putting a gentleman before the mast is, indeed, ridiculous enough; but your disguise might have cheated a keener eye than mine. Well, Sir, had you stuck to your false colours, and made no signal, by Jove, the thing had been done,—and you would have had a run through the Straits, with a three months' cruise in the Mediterranean;—a near chance, believe me, Sir; for, where he fancies, Tom holds on like a dog-fish.”

“We have a proof in point,” said Frank smiling, as a little Guinea-pig sort of squeak

forward gave a hint that Tom's ardour was becoming rather too obstreperous for the lady's nerves; "but as it regards myself, Sir, the man's pertinacity had been of service; for, strange as it may sound, I could have wished for nothing better than any chance of approaching the shores of Italy."

"I am delighted to hear it!" cried the Officer gaily, and with a hearty shake of the hand.

"You shall command all the Falcon can supply:—but this disguise, must it be continued?"

"I am afraid so,—or that it must be exchanged for some other," replied Frank, thoughtfully;—"and it may be necessary, for my interest at least, that we should continue to meet as 'strangers' when strangers are present. I will explain myself hereafter;—but indeed, Sir, I am most deeply obliged by your frank and generous offer."

"Say not a word,—I am delighted!—

We are now on the way to join the ship;
as Othello says,

My affairs cry haste, and speed
Must answer it.

The ship's complement may want some half-dozen hands; they must be pressed, and then we are off."

"Pressed!—My dear Sir; is it possible that you can tolerate so base a practice?"

"I have little choice in the matter, Sir;—and in private I condemn the system as loudly as yourself:—but my orders are to proceed to sea *instantly*;—let those that will the deed, look to the means.—Like a judge, I but execute the law."

"There would be more judgment—forgive the pun—in protesting against it. 'Impressment' is a stain on the flag of England."

"It is an evil, Sir,—and one that the government and the 'people' should eradicate;—both—for it requires the power of the

first, and the moral energies of the latter. It is an injustice that the popular voice must challenge and condemn. The fact is, that there is much to be done before the army or the navy can stand in the attitude that becomes either themselves or the country. The fundamental regulations of both services were founded on a state of society in the lower ranks that has ceased to exist; and thus they must become 'degraded,' and, eventually, 'reduced,' even in 'physical energy,' by receiving only the dregs of the community,—or a more liberal system must be introduced,—and such a one, as would incline men of respectable views and habits to join them."

"I am ready to acknowledge, Sir, that the difficulties of the question are too much overlooked; and, to go farther, I am afraid that the overweening airs of arrogance, and total estrangement of converse, sentiment, and feeling, assumed by the classes 'exempt'

from labour towards those that still must toil;—mark me, I say the classes exempt from ‘labour;’ for the Aristocracy, in the proper sense of the term, have more consideration for their inferiors than have the upstarts of ‘commercial chance:’—well, Sir, I would say that this senseless, unmanly *hauteur*, which seals up the lips of the one class towards the other, as if they were animals of a different species, is fast producing a deep and rankling animosity, which it may soon be too late to allay; and which, if unallayed, will destroy! for it has no touch of fear, and the multitude are grown too wise to bow before assumption. Virtue, usefulness, and wealth, which directly benefit society by giving example and occupation, these are the only objects of popular esteem.

“The security of ignorance has passed away; and the gilded tinsel of ‘exclusive privilege,’ worn down by the force of general information to the worthless dross beneath, no

longer dazzles and misleads. All this is well, but popular excitement often goes too far;—there is much of ornament, and of value in the constitution of society, which it requires superior information to appreciate,—precisely as to understand a machine we must know mechanics.

“ The danger of this re-action is felt;—but as the remedy is unpalatable, it is neglected. Individuals of the Superior Classes, however opposed in politics and religious opinion, are ever ready to coalesce in the support of ‘ aristocratic privilege ;’ and as all exclusive privilege in the few is only held by the *sufferance* of the ‘ many,’ what they cannot command, they attempt to overawe by intimidation,—big words, and sounding titles,—as geese are driven by a crimson rag ! Nay, more ;—in the desperation of their selfish fear, they dare to torture, and that the innocent, regardless of sex or age.

“ I am growing warm, Sir ; but how can

I avoid it, when I consider that this torture is a reality!—That intrusted as they are by Providence with all the wealth of the country, and having the sole power of giving or of withholding employment, and only giving it when it tends to their own advantage!—That knowing these things, that they should dare to tell the starving artisan or peasant, whom their caprice or their ‘*interest*’ has turned adrift, that although the law will not see him perish, yet that the means of a mere sustenance shall not be given but at the cost of all that humanity holds dear—the humble ‘home’ that poverty has left—their ‘wives’ and ‘little ones’—all, all must be surrendered, and each portion of the severed family consent to toil, half-fed and confined in a separate part of the prison-workhouse, or absolutely perish;—this is monstrous!”

“Yes, my dear Sir,” replied the Officer, “it is *rather too bad*; but the best of it is, that it cannot last. One unlucky sea-

son, and ‘this splendid experiment in Political Economy’ would deluge the land in a sea of blood. I agree with you, that the condition of our labouring poor must be duly raised, by kind and liberal means; or that, having given them to eat of the ‘Tree of Knowledge,’ while that of Good and Evil is within their reach, their choice will not be long suspended,—they will snatch the better fruit, and leave their masters to crunch the bitter ashes of the other. But come, I have some German tinder; shall we smoke a cigar?

“The day begins to dawn, and the first breath of the morning is almost as cold as the charity we spoke of.”

CHAPTER VI.

“ Oh ! for a soft and gentle wind,
I heard a fair one cry,
But give to me the roaring breeze,
And wild waves beating high ;—
And ‘ wild waves ’ beating high, my boys,
The good ship tight and free,—
The world of waters is our own,
And merry men are we.”

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

FROM a sea of molten brass, in splendour and intensity of light,—rose the rock of Gibraltar, in one vast screen of purple crags, stretching across the western sky. The

sun yet rested on the verge of the horizon alone in naked radiance ;—a burning globe of living fire.

Far along the indented margin of the coast, the white surf broke in one long line of beautiful and snowy brightness. Diamond lights began to sparkle in the windows of the distant town ; and here and there, the lofty sails of vessels half becalmed, stole slowly up over the glistening bosom of the deep, like spectral illusions from an unknown world.

Presently the ‘signal-gun’ of evening roared from a sea-ward bastion ; its sudden smoke rose in mid air, and vanished ; at the same moment the roll of drums, and a clear deep symphony of bugles from the garrison, marked the curfew hour ;—and with dying echoes lingering on the water, rose in a wild and broken melody.

A change came on ;—the glowing gleams grew milder : a breeze awakening seaward,

darkened the distant ocean into green ;— the spreading shadows gave a bold relief to the forts, and to the gray old ramparts of the embattled lines, extending tier on tier,—bristled with cannon, and dotted here and there with sentinels. On the other side lowered the coast of Africa ; while ever and anon, the shrill cry of the curlew, or the deep long splash of oars, broke on the silence of the scene.

It was thus that ‘ the Pillars of Hercules’ first met the glance of Carema ; and though deeply conscious of the beauty and sublimity of this great portal of the Ocean ! still the thoughts of ‘ home,’ and a strange misgiving, foreboding anxiety, oppressed her almost into tears. The pale and ‘ resolute’ look of Anselmo, too, seemed to presage some chance of evil.

Having soon after she was embarked complained of the *ruse* of his disguise, which was easily forgiven, nothing could

have been more pleasing, polite, and gay, than the whole of his demeanour during the whole of the voyage ; but now, when almost in sight of those bright shores he loved so well, in a strange contrariety, his cheek blanched, and his eye grew heavy.

At the same time, there was an air of watchful vigilance, followed by prompt exertion, and that even in the smallest matters, to be observed in the crew, that seemed to imply the apprehension of some approaching evil, of which she had, as yet, received no hint.

Meanwhile, the vessel glided swiftly and silently through the smooth water in a manner which in itself might seem a marvel. Lulled by the intervening rock, the rising breeze was here unfelt, and it was only by keeping the lower canvas constantly wet, that it was enabled to hold an air so light and baffling. It was no less, by dint of a most disproportionate and unusual press of

sail, that the vessel made way ;—and hence, in some measure, the anxiety of the crew. A puff of wind would have torn every rag from the sticks ! yes, and blown her hull under ! — And yet, in ordinary circumstances, the *Serena* was a perfect ‘ sea-boat,’ and one that ‘ held her own,’ let it blow great guns as it might ;—ay, though the waves broke higher than her tops :—but what of that ?—she was built for the game of death, when the ocean takes the odds, and had qualities that would bear her out in the roughest and the worst.

Longer than a large brigantine, strongly timbered, singularly buoyant, with ample breadth of beam, and a mould with curves graceful as the swelling outlines of the female form, the *Serena* had the fit-out of a yacht ; and was so contrived and found, as to be worked either as a Xebec, or as a Lugger ; her complement of sails, spars, and rigging for either, being beyond the common allowance.

In fine, she was one of that ‘over-trimmed’ sort of craft, that look too knowing to be honest! and, though they may have no gun in sight, have often a convenient ballast of cannon balls, and a tank for powder as well as for water. Rakish as she was, we will not promise all this for the *Serena*; yet still she had enough,—as the sequel may betray.

She was now *Lugger* rigged, and with studding sails boomed out so far, that she seemed like a drifting cloud; and from the way in which she ‘clawed on the wind,’ and stood carefully aloof of every sail she passed, it might very safely be surmised, that there was a better reason than caprice for her ‘prudence:’—in other words, her conduct was suspicious.

The Officer on the station thought so,—and scarcely had she loomed athwart the ‘Old Town,’ than a signal was hoisted for her to ‘lie to,’—and a gally manned to over-

haul her papers. Very strangely, both were disregarded!—The Port-Captain rubbed his eyes and looked again, but still the *Serena* kept her course as steady as the ‘Flying Dutchman’ in a storm!

“This conduct is most extraordinary, Mr. Longmore!”—said the Captain to the first Lieutenant.

“There will be something to do, let your men be armed:—yes, and lose no time, Sir, or the current will set too sharply for the boat.—Zounds! she has manned her sweeps:—let a shot be thrown point-blank; a rap in the chops may bring her to her senses!”

While these hasty preparations were in progress, the *Serena* did not remain unconscious of her danger. Pale and motionless, Anselmo kept his telescope on the *Seventy-Four*, and having watched the gun pointed, —at the very moment he motioned the man at the wheel to cun the *Serena* free off the wind, and as she yawed, and thus came short

of the calculated range, the shot caracoled in harmless gambles on the water: again the *Serena* ‘bit upon the wind,’ while Anselmo shouted to his men, to throw their weight upon the sweeps.

“Draw strong and steady, boys;—five hundred yards, and we shall catch the gale.”

The galley by this time had made-way handsomely, notwithstanding the adverse current, and it became a moot point, whether or not the *Serena* could in any way escape her.

“Is the boat to board, your Honour?”—said a short dare-devil fellow, evidently up to mischief.

“Wait for orders!”—was the cautious reply.

The galley had double banked her oars, and began to near the *Serena*.

“Aloft, boys! the ‘cats-paw’ from the rock will be on us in a trice:—have your knives ready to clear away the top-sails and

studding-gear on the instant! — Quick on the moment, or we feed the sharks!”

The order seemed absurd, the Port galley was almost ranging along side, and the men in her bows were preparing to hook on—the crew of the *Serena* looked round with a wild and hopeless desperation, but still they obeyed the order.—Anselmo took the wheel: the *Serena* passed a bow-shot forward, and suddenly a cold and steady breeze descending from the crest of the rock, caught the upper rigging;—the overbearing pressure drove the vessel staggering gun-wale down; but at the instant, the light duck cut from the studding-booms was flying free! —Swift as the flashing of a gun, the gallant sea-boat lightened aloft,—but still shuddering as she righted, sprung forward with a lurch! —The bursting waters, hissing as they sunk beneath the bosom-like expansion of her bows, and rising again in foaming eddies, boiling and bubbling at her round and polished

stern :—she fled as if a demon drove her through the deep,—but still she fled in safety.

“For God’s sake ! let the ladies keep below !” said Anselmo, in a hurried tone ; but in vain,—Carema came on deck, and Madalena followed,—

“I cannot conceal, Captain, the uneasiness I feel :—why are we thus to shun our friends ?”

“Are we *certain* that they are ‘friends ?’” said Madalena obtrusively,—and she would have added more, but that she met Anselmo’s eye.

“Seamen in the Merchant Service, are not too fond of being overhauled by a ‘man-of-war’s-boat,’ lady :—and now, having given offence, like truant schoolboys, our best safety is in keeping our distance.”

Carema felt the unsubstantial and specious nature of the answer, and alarmed far more than she deemed it prudent to betray, re-

mained in silence. Her thoughts indeed grew bitter; for with this doubt, a new light broke in upon her own conduct,—and she began to blame her estrangement from her guardian as unadvised; and her hasty departure as precipitant, almost to the extent of ingratitude! and her cheek burnt at the idea.

The interference of Anselmo, when disguised as the Pensylvanian Trader, seemed to assume a new aspect; its ingenuity had before amused her, and his love for her friend Madalena had seemed a sufficient motive, but now the fear of something strange and sinister, filled her with suspense and inquietude. This unknown guardian, too;—this ‘paragon,’ (as to her he had been described) of the Italian noblesse:—the proud and impassioned Montrano.

“I am really sorry, Miss Darnley, but duty obliges me to say, that ‘the deck must be cleared.’—The Commander of the Seventy-

Four fancies that he owes us a grudge, and we are still within the range of his guns."

The words were hardly spoken—when a flash of flame, followed by a cloud of smoke from the King's Ship, showed the prudence of the advice. The report and ball came an instant after, and the latter, which had been thrown at an elevated range, fell into the sea at not more than fifty yards short of the *Serena*.

As the baffled boat pulled back to the ship, three other shots were fired,—but with no better success. The ladies, meanwhile, had gone below, and the *Serena* under reduced sail,—and with the advantage of a gentle breeze was working easy, and likely to clear the straits, when, from the passage of boats, and the exchange of signals, it was evident that there was a stir on shore.

"As we live," said Anselmo to the prime seaman who acted as his Mate—"they will

bend the sails of the Frigate, and send her out to pick up the little Serena, if she can ! Faith, we shall see a Bengal Tigress mousing in a ladies chamber next."

"I am afraid it will prove no joke in the end, Sir," replied the old tar—"hark ! they are heaving on the capstan—the deep 'ye yeo,' comes hollow on the wind."

The Frigate rode with a spring on her cable, seaward of the Seventy-Four,—a silvery ripple streaked the Ocean far before her ; while flush-decked, long, and rakish,—she lay low, dark, and dangerous as an alligator on the surface of the water. As yet to the eye she seemed inanimate, the hammocks in her nettings sheltering the crew from sight, —her bare yards glittering in the sun,—while with every line hauled taut—the elegant and lofty tracery of her rigging rose with a beautiful distinctness, before a sky flushed and luminous with closing day.

"We shall stand but the chance of a

hunted swallow before a hawk !”—said Anselmo, with a bitter smile ;—“ Look, boy, she veers already !”

All eyes were turned with a fearful interest on the Frigate, which had begun to change her position, by slipping a warp. The shrill whistle of the Boatswain sounded, and on the signal her shrouds were black with men !—the heavier sails were soon swung to the tops ; the yards were manned, while the courses were bent with a celerity which showed the ardour and high discipline of her crew.

Instantaneously the fore-sail shot aloft ; the spanker shivered in the gale,—they belied with its surging pressure ; and, all at once, the gallant fabric began to stem the rolling tides of Ocean !

CHAPTER VII.

————— “Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me, and on high
The winds lift up their voices : I depart,
Whither I know not.”

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE.

SEVERAL hours had elapsed, and still the chase continued with that awful sameness, that equipoise of fear and hope, which keeps the mind on the tenterhooks of suspense, till the very heart aches with defeated expectation.

Hitherto, the safety of the *Serena* had depended on the station she had previously obtained, and still preserved, upon the wind ; but now midnight approached, and it was evident that some change of weather was at hand.

“ If the gale freshens, the ship will overreach us,” said Anselmo, in a low whisper, to the Mate.

“ Come farther aft, and listen:—

“ Yes, listen, as if the words were my ‘ last ;’ and as such let them be obeyed. It is my intention to ‘ blow up the *Serena*,’ rather than brook the fate that might follow a capture ! In that case, myself and the three Corsicans remain on board, while the rest of the crew, with the ladies in charge, must depend upon the launch, which you will take under your command, and pull for Algiers ;—when there, this letter will secure your future safety.

“ Say not a word !—If I blow up the

Serena, the explosion shall burst from beneath the bows of the Frigate ;—nor shall I, my good fellow, be without a rescue for the life I venture.”

Anselmo had spoken with his usual serenity, nay, even with a cheerfulness of tone ; but the solemnity of his look, and the searching keenness of his glance, gave the Mate a shrewd suspicion that he had made up his mind for the last sacrifice, and that the fatal event would probably ensue. With these thoughts upon his mind, without a word, and in the very dumbness of sorrow, the Mate bowed his head with a mournful acquiescence, and withdrew to attend to his duty forward.

The night had been clear, with a star-lit sky of that deep cerulean blue, which painters love to contrast with the rich carnations of female beauty, when they group Bacchantes or wood-nymphs in some festive scene of ancient fable.

A night, warm and glowing, with a light subdued, yet clear in its deep tenderness, as that fond glance affection trembles to betray. Such had it been, but now, as if in envy of its melting softness, the moon, louring and dull, wrapped in a pile of shadowy clouds, rose eastward,—the offing darkening as she came.

“We have a promise there!”—said Anselmo, pointing to the vapour ;—

“We shall have one of those violent storms common in these seas anon!—Well, let it come! though it wrap us in the gloom of hell, it now were welcome.”

“I think the frigate nears us,” said the mate.

“I think so too,”—replied Anselmo, who had just withdrawn his eye from the glass ;—

“And I know the cause; she lies a full streak higher in the water than she did ;—and yet this is most extraordinary, for she

must have cast ballast overboard to a dangerous amount. The anxiety they show to pick up the *Serena*, is something more than natural; our only expedient will be to risk more canvas, though, by the bye, we must fall a point off the wind for that purpose. ”

This was immediately done; and soon the bending and overloaded masts of the *Serena* bore a cloud of sail, which, if it promised safety in one sense, was in itself most critical, as the overstrained spars and half buried hull began to testify.

The gale freshened; and, as the frantic horse of Mazeppa bore his bound and naked rider over the waste, staggering forward with convulsive bounds,—so the overpacked *Serena* floundered through the surging waters, gunnel down at every lurch, but still scudding onward with a wild impetuous speed, her head submerged in jets of boiling foam,

and her nearly started rigging quivering and creaking as she passed.

On the offing, in the meanwhile, still loomed the Frigate, winning her way, as it seemed, without an effort ; and, as both vessels were now moving at nearly the same velocity, she seemed even stationary in the distance.

“ Our light spars cannot bear this tearing service much longer,”—observed Anselmo ;—

“ If any thing should start, we are lost beyond all hope !”

“ But half an hour, Sir, and the threatening storm will puzzle the Frigate rather too much to leave her time to think of us !”

“ It is a desperate alternative,” replied the Captain.

“ Yet, let it come, and it is but right to remember, that we must have encoun-

tered the weather, if we had never seen the Frigate. If we have time to make all snug, the *Serena* has nothing to fear from the roughest sea that ever swept a deck ! if not, our hope must be, that the extra stays will save the lower masts.

“ Ah ! the wind begins to lull, it thunders ! ”

The peal redoubled,—and as it echoed through the firmament, the clouds that had enshrouded the moon, were suddenly detached, as if attracted towards the water, where they formed a moving fog-bank, enlarging rapidly and gathering windward.

In the meantime a dull vague dimness suffused itself around, and imperceptibly the vapoury island in the distance swallowed up the intervening space, until the offing seemed diminished to a span with a curtain of black and moving mist, beyond which coruscations of lightning began to gleam with momentary radiance.

The air gained an exceeding dampness with a close and stifling heat, while the faint and sobbing gale sunk into a dead and silent calm. This perfect lull was however as yet circumscribed within a narrow circle, for magnified and raised beyond its real level by the mirage, the pursuing frigate still came on darkly dim, like a moving shadow sailing in the air.

The gloom increased, until it wrapt all things in its blackness, except one lurid spot, where the obscured moon still faintly shone as an omen of disaster.

With all the promptitude of high resolve Anselmo had taken care that the *Serena* was prepared (as far as might be) to encounter the crash of elements expected to ensue. In the hope too of gaining distance, the sweeps had been manned, and the vessel still made way.

During this interval of suspense, the female passengers again came on deck ; and Mada-

lena, filled with a wild inquietude for her lover's safety, put a thousand unmeaning, though anxious questions to Anselmo:—the disquietude of Carema was equally great, but with an indignant feeling of the past, she awaited the event in silence.

“ I have a strong hope of making Melilla on the African coast, and if we can double the promontory under which it lies before dawn, we shall have given them the slip most handsomely.”

Delighted to hear of this expedient, Madalena thanked Anselmo in tones of joy and confidence, and in her own view considered all their perils as even then surmounted.

“ After all”—continued Anselmo, “ I begin to suspect that the menaced storm will pass away,—and yet it is strange that we have no rain!—the clouds are actually down upon us, and floating on the bosom of the deep.”

“ You bear the fortune of Cæsar,” said

Madalena, pressing his arm, and looking up with a fond exulting glance.

“This blessed gloom has arisen in the very moment of our danger!—could any thing be more propitious?”——

“Still we must be cautious, Love,” replied the Captain, as, with his arm around her waist, he pressed her proudly to his side,—

“A sailor’s bride should sport with fear, but still with prudence.

“Here, Pietro, — take that lantern off the poop: a single spark, if seen, would now ruin and betray us.”

“Our glass runs fine then!”—responded the Mate, in a tone that implied too much of conviction.

Even while he spoke, the whole atmosphere seemed changed into a mass of flame, —and for several seconds flash followed flash, spreading a glare of intolerable light over

the whole horizon, and revealing the relative situation of the vessels.

The Frigate having before taken in sail,—had been lying-to in utter uncertainty what course to steer, but that point being thus ascertained, the next flash showed her with her sweeps manned, and pulling rapidly for the *Serena*.

This, as Anselmo observed to the Mate, was the fatal crisis he had foretold; and though a short and broken sea prevailed from the late gale, that might prove inconvenient to an open boat, yet he began to prepare the launch for her intended service.

An interval of darkness again intervened; but so convinced were the crew of the *Serena*, of the futility of any effort to preserve their vessel, that they almost ceased to pull,—and the greater part remained in a state of sullen apathy. The females too were silent; and how different were their feelings at that eventful moment!

Madalena, as she clasped the cold hand of her lover, and hung for protection on his neck, felt that all hope was banished from his bosom, or that he would not thus have remained the silent witness of her torture. Meanwhile, Carema, perfectly unconscious of the dark remembrances of violence and sorrow, which clouded the mind of Anselmo, and the fatal retribution he had to fear, viewed the approaching overhaul from the Frigate as a matter of little moment, and rather rejoiced with the hope of hearing news from England.

Again the distant thunder growled ; and elated with their approaching triumph the crew of the Frigate cheered loudly, and laboured with redoubled zeal.—The lightning grew more fiercely rapid, and still as she neared,—the exulting shouts grew louder ! then all at once they ceased,—and presently arose a long deep wail, and yells of agony and fear !

A thunderbolt, bright and dazzling as the sword of Heaven! had struck the Frigate midships, and passing aft, had filled her with wreck and fast consuming fire!

Happily the greater part of the crew were forward—for of the others, but few escaped with life; and of these, some unfortunate wretches scorched, blackened, and shrieking with agony, were crawling from the open ports.

In vain the voice of command was answered, with the ready gallantry of perfect discipline, for the brave crew had to contend with difficulties beyond control or rescue. Even as the drum beat to quarters, the main and mizen masts had fallen blazing by the board.

Vast volumes of smoke, with roaring, dazzling sheets of flame and showers of sparks, now burst through the stern windows, the ports and scuppers, until the decks them-

selves yawned open, and all was one dread and glowing pit of floating fire!

The conflagration of the entire vessel was indeed inevitable; and as the boats had been destroyed, the crew seemed altogether without a refuge;—presently, however, it was evident that they were attempting to construct a raft from the floating wreck under the bows.

In the desperation of the moment, this task was soon accomplished, but then a new difficulty arose, in getting it to move:—nor was it after all so far cleared as to be out of danger:—still with ‘the ruling passion strong in death,’ (for their destination promised nothing better,) the gallant band hoisted the cross emblazoned ensign, which has so nobly braved “the battle and the breeze!”—and lashed it on the crazy fabric.

By this time the sky had resumed its former pitchy hue,—the thunder storm having

altogether subsided; when, from the ruddy light that gleamed from the burning ship, in the far distance across, the glistening surface of the deep, a speck, perchance a far distant sail, as yet well down beneath the offing, was faintly visible.

“Oh! Captain Anselmo,”—exclaimed Carrema,—“surely you will not leave them thus to perish.”

“My dear Madam, I have awaited the event with an anxiety equal to your own,—but perhaps you have not observed that they have avoided to make any signal for assistance; and what will surprise you more, from the arms they have secured, and other particulars, I have no doubt but that they intend to board us from the raft, while we are thus becalmed, and, in one sense, more helpless than themselves.”

Fully convinced of the Captain's sincerity, and conscious that the disparity of numbers

would leave the *Serena* no chance, Carema admired the propriety of Anselmo's caution; while with the aid of a telescope, she obtained a nearer sight of the wretched crew on their crazy ark of refuge.

Formed of irregular spars, casks, and sea-chests hastily lashed together, and crowded with men, many of whom were waist deep in water; while, as the raft itself was half submersed, nothing could appear more perilous than their condition. A second glance showed that the raft had got entangled with the wreck of the masts, and was still dragging on the hull.

To clear off these attachments, great exertions were now being made, and groups of half-naked sailors were actively engaged in cutting away the encumbrance, as fast as its situation could be observed; but as many of the lines were deeply sunk, their efforts as yet had been fruitless, as were those of

a gang who had shipped a pair of sweeps, with the hope of getting the raft in motion.

The officers were assisting in these operations with the usual manly temper and vigilance of the service; and amongst them, Carema fancied that she had discovered the form of one, but too familiar to her recollection,—that of Blandford!

Long and ardently she gazed, until suspicion changed to certainty; and wild with the idea of his danger, and yet timid and averse to own his presence, for what might that avail?—she beheld again the object of her maiden dreams,—the form of him whose un-owned love had been as the hidden treasure of her young and innocent affections!

And now,—how was he recovered?—even as an unsubstantial vision of our sleep, rich in the near possession of a joy that melts away in darkness and affright!—he

stood as one fore-doomed,—as one benighted on the crumbling ledge of some high precipice, while the unfathomed waves of Eternity are rolling heavily beneath.

“Look to your sweeps, men!”—cried Anselmo suddenly.

“Steady,—give way, Boys;—a hundred fathoms more, or the Frigate may prove an awkward neighbour yet:—give way.”

Aware that some new danger was impending, but without the least idea of its nature, Carema gazed distractedly on the receding scene, until at last, happening to observe the strange sail in the distance, which was now grown more distinct, and evidently a ship, she considered it to be the cause of Anselmo's vigilance; and her serenity returned, with the hope that the approaching vessel might prove of service to Frank and his companions.

It was but the delusion of a moment,—

the gentle smile of satisfaction had hardly dimpled on her cheek, when suddenly, astounded by a hollow burst of sound, and at the next instant wrapped in a suffocating vapour,—gasping for breath, and nearly blinded, Carema clung to the nearest object for support.

“The explosion has passed, and yet we live,”—said Anselmo in a solemn, quiet tone.

“The Frigate has blown up, lady;—but still, thanks be to Heaven, we are safe!”

Carema heard not, answered not the adjuration. She thought not of herself;—paralyzed with terror, cold and motionless as marble, she looked in desperation, but vainly, for the raft.

From the dark and weltering bosom of the deep, arose a vast and shapeless mass of fiery cloud, which was vomiting around it a cataract of sparks and crackling embers! these fell hissing in the sea, and then the

vapour grew dim and shadowy, almost to blackness:—again, as the heavier smoke exhaled, a bright and coppery flash of light sprung up, and gathering on itself, towered in a lofty column;—meanwhile, the lower works of the torn and dismantled ship still held together by the metal sheathing, and, level with the water, were grown red and glowing as some infernal cauldron filled with penal fire.

“ They have perished !” exclaimed the almost fainting Carema.

“ Believe it not, Lady!—there they lie starboard of the wreck, soddened in the water, doubtless, as a hunted otter, but still unharmed by the fire.”

“ Oh, Captain! as you hope for mercy!” cried Carema, arousing all her energy,

“ Trifle no longer, or they will sink before you, carried down with the burning wreck.

“ Hark ! the fast encroaching waters already hiss and bubble around the burning, sinking ship ! ”

“ Lady, the hull of the Frigate may float an hour yet, and in half that time those poor fellows may have far better help than any we can render. I see that the stranger has caught a light air seaward, and travels faster than may suit our purpose.”

Having thus spoken, Anselmo hastened to give the necessary orders, and in a few minutes the little *Serena* had expanded her canvas pinions, to catch the first faint breathings of the coming gale.

CHAPTER VIII.

Protheus. " 'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,
And that hath dazzled my reason's light;
But when I look on her perfections,
If I can check my erring love, I will,
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill."

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

Sir Giles Overreach. " You do conclude too fast, not
knowing me,
Nor the engines that I work by."

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS.

ALTHOUGH the law of self-preservation might at the fatal moment itself have exonerated Kenrick from the guilt of a direct murder in the homicide of Smuggleton, yet it must be re-

membered, that that deed was but the sequence of a premeditated villany, of which the victim was meant to be the dupe; and conscious of this, the horrors of that fearful hour clung with a sickening,—nay, with a blasting influence upon his mind.

The fiery kiln, fresh glowing with its human fuel, and the fierce, but dying eyes, that threatened from its blaze, still haunted him, in public and in private; and as small doses of corrosive poison, although too weak to kill, yet vitiate and deprave, until the animal functions become incapable of healthy action; so the heart of this lonely and avaricious man became seared and callous to the touch of human pity.

His thirst of wealth, insatiate as it was, had before been mingled with a relish for the pleasures that wealth bestows; and this in some measure redeemed him from the baseness of an utter selfishness;—for society is so constituted, that all its benefits are

more or less reciprocal; and happily, no man can alone unlock the portals of enjoyment.

But now, grown sore with the festerings of a vain remorse, each softer emotion withered from his bosom, and nought remained but the restless instinct of a cunning, from long habit ever eager for the accumulation of money,—and that, overshadowed with the pale, cold passion of the base,—the coward's fear of death.

Thus to escape one evil, Kenrick had plunged into another;—and hence arose the false accusation that had made his nephew an outlaw and a fugitive:—but no sooner had the flight of Blandford seemed to attest the truth of his charge, and by placing Kenrick in the attitude of an injured man, awakened the sympathy of his mercantile neighbours, than offers of important assistance came in on every side;—and if Kenrick had been as honest as he seemed,—like Job,

his 'latter state' had been far better than his first. As it was, the idea of Peter's privacy to his guilt, arose, with every passing hour, like the thunder flash of heaven, to warn him from the proffered paradise.

Over-wrought with these emotions, dark and dangerous were the thoughts of Kenrick, as he revolved in his mind the tantalizing perplexities of his situation; and strangely enough, the vicious weakness of Peter, in bolstering up the infamous charge against Blandford, seemed to justify Kenrick to his own mind, in the worst designs against his accomplice; and it was only the fear of some inquiry from the Custom House Officer that saved Peter from a secret and miserable end.

In the meantime, Kenrick had raised considerable sums for rebuilding his Warehouse, and seemed as much as ever involved in the mystery of merchandize, when his nerves received a fresh shock from the large seizures

of smuggled silks then made in London, and involving (as the Reader may remember) some houses which had before been deemed of the first respectability.

These discoveries had been so adroitly managed, and had proved so lucrative to the informers, that, as Kenrick very properly concluded, the danger of his own enterprizes would for a time be doubled; and he therefore resolved to leave the country, and, if possible, to wind up accounts with his foreign correspondents, taking credit for the concealed property that had so lately perished, and for the loss of which, notwithstanding the insurance money he had received, he intended them to answer: and above all others, there was one whose character had hitherto stood on such points as clear of impeachment as his own, and on whose pride and fears he expected to be able to practise to advantage.

With these views he had quietly left

Bristol shortly before the abduction of Carema; and having embarked at London under a feigned name, had landed safely and unnoticed at an obscure port of Italy.

Having thus made up for the 'lee-way' of Master Kenrick, the Reader shall catch a glimpse of the surly old royster in *propria persona*, as he ascends one of the worst of the rugged roads of Calabria.

Observe that abutment of rock projecting boldly from the precipice, and presenting a terrace for the mountain track which has just submerged from that deep valley to the right, which is so grotesquely scattered over with masses of broken granite and darkened with the ancient firs of a former age. Far above, the naked and thunder-scathed rocks hang loosely with an awful grandeur,—the wild birds scream among their clefts,—and here and there hangs a blasted pine, still clinging to the lower crags, and stretching

upward with gaunt dry limbs, all white and rifted.

Near the centre a mountain gorge opens abruptly on the distance ;—a shadowy scene lies out beyond, of vapour-shrouded promontories, rolling clouds, and flying storms, while on its farthest verge the horizon is dashed with a streak of the distant Ocean, gleaming faintly beneath an evening sky.

Happily to aid our purpose, a flash of sunshine still lingers on the shelf of rock that bears the road ; and ends, as if to infer an omen, at a pile of stones surmounted by one of those rude wooden crosses set up in the South to mark the spot of a murder. At the other end the same broad sunny flash has lighted up the figures of two solitary horsemen, who have just advanced to its level.

The first of these, with top-boots, loose great-coat, valise, prim perpendicular seat,

and large-boned horse, appears the very *beau ideal* of an English mercantile traveller of some seventy years ago; when those peaceful 'Knights of the Road' journeyed forth on their own hacks, flanked on either side by ample saddle-bags, with huge portmanteau strapped behind, and not unfrequently with holsters at the pommel; the one, perhaps, sensibly filled with a canteen of potent Cognac, while the other boasted its proper inhabitant,—a pistol.

Now the traveller before us has 'both' the pistols as well as the holsters, while the heavy, hammer-headed whip he carries, might at close quarters form quite as formidable a weapon, at least when wielded by so powerful an arm.

At first sight a question might arise as to whether all these warlike accoutrements were assumed for present safety or future use, for the swarthy-looking horseman at his side is certainly not the most encouraging

companion one might pick up on a summer's day.

The muzzle of a slung carbine peeping out from beneath his black Italian cloak, and the studded shagreen hilt of a stiletto worn in his belt, are indications, too, that he is as well prepared for aggression as defence ;—and then the fellow rides with the easy slouch of a practised Trooper :—he is certainly a bandit !

Yes ! the tiger-like curl of his upper lip and the dilating flash of his eager eye confirm it.—No ; call him a “*Contrabandiere* ;” —the term is grown quite popular amongst the *damigelle*.

“ This,”—said Kenrick, pointing to the cross,—

“ This is one of the plague spots of your country,—a token both of its credulity and cruelty.”

“ The ignorance that would expect us to mistake the symbol for the reality in

the first, may well impute the second ;”—replied the Stranger, fiercely ;—

“ The holy cross is indeed an emblem !—Ay, by my troth, it is a token of the pardon all may crave :—and, as planted there, it is a symbol of the detestation all should feel.”

“ Well, let it pass ;”—said Kenrick, frowning sullenly, and dropping the rein as the horse balanced himself with his head in climbing over some loose fragments of rock that happened to encumber the way ;—

“ Let it pass.”

“ Not so easily,”—answered his companion ;—

“ Tell me, Signor *Inglese*, are there no spots in England stained with blood, that cry to Heaven for a vengeance as yet delayed ?—Say, are there none ?”

He stopped short ; for checking his horse suddenly, and standing in his stirrups, Kenrick had turned upon him as if about to

strike. No blow, however, passed ; for that momentary glance was sufficient to satisfy the suspicious Kenrick that the remark had been made without the intention of a personal application ;—and the parties again rode silently forward.

It was many hours after this, and the travellers had advanced some weary leagues, and the fresh air of the sea came damp and gusty from the neighbouring coast, when on turning a promontory, the tall gray turrets of a feudal fortress appeared on the crest of a precipitous hill immediately before them, —and, in that clear atmosphere, as it seemed at no great distance.

“ The sight of stone walls always give me something of a qualm,—a sort of a chill ;” —said Kenrick,—

“ The place, too, looks half in ruins,—no great encouragement in that. And then they say, that your Lords and Princes in Italy, Manificoes, Excellenzas, and the rest

of them, manage to live with a strange small quantity of solid eating. Well, now hark ye, friend,—as I have but a small appetite for lentils, maccaroni, the *flesh* of grapes, ices, lemonade, sugar-plums, or dried fish,—let me ask you what chance we have of a roast capon and a flask of wholesome wine?”

“When I am within those gates,” said the swarthy horseman at his side,—

“I have one thought, and only *one*, on my mind.”

“Very well, very right,”—mumbled Kenrick, somewhat puzzled;—

“What is that?”

“How far I may trust to Fortune for the chance of repassing them! The game has had a long run one way:—I have heard the Count say twenty times, that he would give his life to be quit of us,—a cast on the other side would bring the balance even!—he may keep his *own*, and take ours!”

“ If I thought that there was the least—the most remote danger—” exclaimed Kenrick, reining in his horse to a dead halt.

“ Nonsense,”—said the other roughly,—

“ We live by danger ! No man who ventures out so far with me turns back, at least without a pistol shot to aid his flight ! The truth is, that the Count has had the better half of the staff too long. The profits, the enormous profits, have been his own.”

Kenrick bit his lip, but was conveniently silent ; his want of honesty as an agent had rendered those profits much less than was suspected :—the other continued—

“ Yes, we have had the peril and the toil, and he has sucked the honey ! but, as the orange ripens, it is still the more easy to be squeezed ! Let the rash Anselmo grow grey in the buffets of the storm, deluded with day-dreams of the ‘ *honour* ’ that will not run current with the world,—the honour that is *not* ‘ repu-

tation,' and no more than the outlaw's hollow boast!—or seek his guerdon from a ripe lip and a melting eye! Yes, and for these toys of boy-hood slave on, for another's profit.—You and I, Signior, will snatch our *own*, though we find it in the pocket of another!—ay, and though the gold were slippery with his heart's best blood!"

"What! you mean not violence?"—exclaimed Kenrick, in alarm;—

"For the love of Heaven venture not too much, or they will cut our throats, man, before the dawn! the Count is surrounded by vassals whose knives are ready at a wink."

The Italian gave no answer, but, as he rode on, he looked behind him with a sly malicious leer, that promised more for his prudence than his courtesy.

And now, dear Reader, we will steal a march on our travellers, and entering the

castello before them, set thee down at once in the presence of its lord ; yea, though the bell has tolled for the hour of rest, and all, save the sentries on the ramparts, should be wrapped in the forgetfulness of sleep.

How solemn, and yet how charming, is the silence,—the dim and mellowed radiance of this rich chamber!—so thick and soft its carpets, that the tread might fall without a sound. How elegant its tall Venetian windows, spanned with marble tracery, entwined with foliage, loaded with incense-breathing flowers ;—its snow-white bed, with rosy-tinted drapery, confined with golden wreaths ;—its deep clear mirrors, its sofas of glowing velvet ; its life-like sculptures, and its pictured walls, where the mythological visions of the ancient world seem starting into being ; and, perhaps more beautiful than all, in its subdued and modest grace, a single candelabra, surmounted with a vase-like lamp

of oriental alabaster, which sheds a mild transparent gleam; and is itself translucent as fleecy clouds that wrap the bright autumnal-moon.

Such was the chamber, a fitting shrine for Hymen in his high triumphant hour; when, amid delicious tears and murmuring sighs, the blushing Loves resign their trophies at their mother's feet, and chant shrill pæans to the sparkling stars of night.

Through the open windows stream the moon beams, so strong, and, as it were, grown palpable in their effulgence, that they seem a spiritual essence, and might well excuse the fond belief that makes them shed an influence magical and strange!

And are we sure, that this bold legend of the olden time is altogether false?—and that the ‘silvery Regent of the night’ has not the power to penetrate the brain of him who sleeps incautiously beneath her thrilling gleams?

Full in the icy glare of that strong light, with face upraised, as, leaning back, and slumbering on a couch beside the window, lies the Count Montrano. Even as he sleeps, the muscles of his countenance are wrought and quiver faintly, as the starts of passion strengthen. The calm fixed look of innate dignity worn in the day is lost amid the eager workings of a mind stung with wild thoughts,—and the haunting recollections of a life of strange vicissitudes.

His breath now heaves more heavily:—he seems to threaten! and then, in quick remorse, with gesture passionate and fierce, he rends his dress, and lays his bosom naked to the night!—struck with the sudden chill, a shudder creeps upon him, and he wakes.

“Ah! how is this?”—exclaimed Montrano, pressing his throbbing forehead with a hand yet cold; the fire that lurked within

burnt in upon the brain, and smouldered in the heart, but left each limb as yet half palsied with the stupor of repose.

“Methought Anselmo’s look betrayed the news he dared not utter,—even as, when a youth, he stood beside my couch on the morning of her death:—since that black hour, years have rolled by, and yet the vision rose clear and distinct in each particular, as that bright witching star of love, that lured me, as I watched it, into this sad and troubled sleep.

“How bitter is the thought, that half our life is often but a struggle how to live; the feverish effort how to realize that fond delicious dream that Fancy hangs upon the future; and which, ever like the Phantom of the mountain mist, seems brightest and fairest when the most remote.

“One might believe that Heaven had left a seed of madness in the human heart, to stultify the cravings of insatiate self;—

to make us each pursue some vague chimera, which, however fatal to our peace, may, even without our wish, be beneficial to mankind. One barter all the holy joys of sweet domestic peace for martial fame, and, torn and bleeding, dies in agony; slain in the quarrel of some half-idiot prince, who deems his death a lucky chance, even as it leaves a space for some new 'favourite,' who, in his turn, may court grim Danger as a bride, and, dying equally without a cause, share too the Dog's forgotten grave:—'tis pitiful that Faith and Honesty should have no better recompense.

“ Another, lost in the sordid lust of wealth, squanders existence as a slavish drudge at law or trade, cramping the intellect in artificial trammels, that leave it less than instinct; or at best, they suffer it to run to waste choked up with musty calculations. Well, let them pass: the do-tards may teach us that the plough of Per-

severance in the field of Industry must be followed by the softening dews of Liberality and Social Intercourse, or that the harvest will not prove worth reaping.

“The fools of Fashion are the jest of every day ; they perish like the gnat, scorched in the flame they worship.

“And Love!—Ay, let me pause :—if Love is found a folly, it is the fault of imbeciles, who so pervert a noble impulse to their own mean level. Love must share its hopes and treasures for the future with the present. Love tramples down with generous warmth the cold distinctions of rank and circumstance, to bring into its circle of enjoyment the forms of beauty, the manly sympathies, the family affections and holy charities, that give existence all its value.”

Montrano paused, smote with a thought that shot a numbness through his heart. The glow of generous excitement faded, and his cheek assumed a sallow paleness.

He thought of that perverted will, and adverse fate, that, even in the dawn of manhood, had driven his inexperienced youth on desperate courses. The agonies of slighted love,—the pinings of a vain remorse,—and the long tedious dreamy interval that followed, when life was without an object:—all these came back in memory, and stung like scorpions at the pride that scorned the touch of that baseness it had been doomed to suffer.

And more intolerable, more hateful still, the insults of the meaner spirits that clung upon him with the low familiar fellowship of vice, as reptiles fasten with their slime! and challenged sufferance from his fears, lest they should post him to the world, as being still the desperate spirit that once had been to them, even as a god in evil!

All this was degradation; and far too real to be shunned; and how might these compete with those high aspirations that linked

his heart with honour and Carema?—Those yearnings for the extacy that only blooms beneath the smile of virtue?

“ Oh, who shall pluck the innocent flower of a virgin love, with a hand already callous with the vices of the world, nor crush its tender stalk, nor mar its delicate petals with a touch so rude.

“ Oh! would the gothic tales of sorcery were no fable,—and it were possible to win the guerdon of a happier life, though perchased with all they threaten of the penal doom,—their horrible hereafter!—But there is yet one magic left, the bright illusions of the senses when art and science minister to nature; and that philosophy that sinks the past and future in the ‘present;’ that grows a giant in its own resolve, and thus creates the pleasure that it would enjoy.

“ These spells are still within my power: as cowards die the many deaths of fear! so he that stoops before the frowns of Fortune

owns her power, where a brave indifference shuns and conquers ! I'll woo Carema, as the Siren sings, brim full of joy ! as if the storms and sorrows of the world were lulled and lost in one broad ocean of a measureless content, all calmly bright, and sparkling into pleasure."

With an energy of will untameable, joined with an equal buoyancy of heart, the Count's poetical imagination and warmth of temperament enabled him to supersede the painful promptings of reality ; and, in the strength and triumph of his fantasy to feel the gaiety he feigned.

Again the flush of animation mantled on his cheek, his full eye flashed, and he arose all life and daring, as if the touch of Time had left no pressure on his sinews, and youth were his for ever.

Now then to conjure with the alchymy of Art, and drink a sweet delirium through the eyes ! The dead, the absent, and the living,

are all assembled here, in one delicious form of smiling woman! Yes, and be this the ‘master charm’ to lull the thrilling heart that aches for an extacy still dearer; ’twas gold that bought this fair entrancing shadow, and ‘gold’ shall no less secure the substance,—and soon the bright sparkling waves of southern seas shall yield me up a second Queen of Beauty in Carema.”

While thus speaking, Montrano touched the secret spring of a cabinet, when on the instant as the inlaid valves fled open, and bright as a fairy in the blissful sheen of some enchanted bower,—the idol of his maddening flame, the young and delicate Carema was present to his fond devouring gaze.

That glance was one so long,—so passionate, that it had seemed no marvel if the very picture had deepened to a blush. The face; the form;—were loveliness personified! and yet made still more lovely by those subtile graces of radiant light, of deep-

ening tint and mellowing shade, that fascinate,—until, as Byron says—

“ We gaze and turn aside, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty.”

So rapt and motionless stood Montrano, until the clatter of horses,—and presently, loud knocks and muttering voices broke on the stillness of the night, and roused him from his trance.

“ Stand back, Sirs—the Count may not command your entrance—stand back!—The night should teach us caution.”

It was the voice of Fazzello from the piazza of the inner court, and very strangely no answer was returned :—presently, the tramplings of a struggle became audible :—a rush upon the staircase followed, by the slam of a heavy door and the clang of bolts ;—and now pale and breathless the astonished page was standing before his lord.

“ Well done, my gallant boy ! ” exclaimed

the Count—"you have closed the pass with the promptitude of an old engineer. And now, Fazzello, sound a parley.—What would these rude and forward roysters have with the Lord Montrano?"

The Capitano is one, your Eccellenza, and as for the other, I think him uglier than the Pope's Headsman at Rome, the villany of whose countenance balked the priest, who would have given him absolution with a demur of conscience—the four cardinal sins are stamped on every feature."

"Is the Capitano mad?—Or, is the companion you speak of some demon in disguise, who has possessed him with the folly of thus obtruding on my quiet?—Go, send them hither."

"They are *armed*, your Eccellenza!"

This was said in a low significant tone.

"And what is worse in the way of danger, they are both sufficiently possessed

with the most unruly spirit of the earth—the demon Brandy!”

“There is something in this:”—said Montrano, thoughtfully.

“The Capitano never drinks except when on the brink of some unsavory enterprize. Not that he lacks courage, but that when restless with unpleasant thoughts, he drowns them in a flowing cup.”

“A ‘stranger,’ too!—The business we might have to arrange would brook no witness—look out for the worst, Fazzello!—Arouse the household;—and then let them meet me as they list. The Capitano has borne too bold a front upon my favour:—if there is mischief on his mind, the sooner known the sooner baffled.”

All on the moment was on the stir, the great bell of the Castello began to toll—lights flashed, and the noisy jests and wild halloos of the serving men and martial re-

tainers, resounded from the halls and courts beneath.

The strangers meanwhile had remained at the head of the staircase, which had been closed upon them by Fazzello, so that the Count had no alternative, but to await them in the chamber,—or to meet them in the corridor, he chose the latter ; and Fazzello having received some private orders, and placed the lamp upon the floor, admitted the Capitano and his friend,—and, as in retiring he had locked the door, they were in one sense prisoners, and alone with Montrano.

Dark and lofty with a range of ancient family pictures suspended on the one side,—and a row of deeply indented narrow lancet-shaped recesses on the other, the long naked and silent corridor had an air of solemn magnificence, that suited well with the haughty bearing of Montrano !

Standing near the lamp, and with his

eyes fixed on the portrait of one of his war-like ancestors, the Count remained at their entrance as one abstracted ;—and then recovering himself with an air of calm indifference, he motioned them to pause at a small space beyond the lamp.

The Capitano would have passed more forward, had not the Count repelled him by a second look,—while Kenrick checked his temerity, by what he meant to be a friendly pull of caution at the cloak. As it was, both kept their allotted distance,—and as the flare of the lamp struck upwards, the lower of sullen ferocity on the brow of the Capitano ; and the furtive glances of the astonished and half affrighted Kenrick, were strongly contrasted, with the dignified serenity of the Count as he now stood, inclining his head with an air of deep attention to learn the nature of their business.

This pause was precisely what both desired to avoid, — for men who intend

opposition, like some pretence of previous provocation, that may excuse and give an edge to the violence they mean to use.

“Well! my Lord Montrano, are we that ‘feed your dogs,’ to be the first to suffer from their fangs?—That cur, Fazzello, dared to deny your presence—but if—”

“Signior Cornaldi!” exclaimed the Count, in a tone of hasty emphasis,

“Tempt not too far my patience:—rather explain what means the presence of this ‘stranger,’ our intercourse but seldom needs a witness.”

“You will forget me soon, my Lord!—Your *dignity* does well to overlook us little men.—The Signior, Kenrick, if I mistake not, hath sent some ‘golden’ envoys, that might have claimed a warmer greeting for their master.”

“Pardon me, Sir!”—exclaimed the Count, addressing Kenrick, and in evident surprise.

“Our interview at London occurred so

long ago, and both are changed so far—that memory proved a traitor to my wish ;—you are indeed most welcome. And shall I venture to say, that I should rejoice yet more,—if, like myself, you were anxious to shake off the trammels of that contamination, which ‘ruins’ those it makes!—that tempts with gold, and blasts with ‘infamy!’—or, as with yourself and me, leaves a hollow ‘reputation,’—that every scoffing knave may wither at a word.”

“What !”—cried Cornaldi, catching fire at the allusion :

“What, is it come to this!—The wolf forsooth will play the watch-dog when his maw is gorged.—Your wealth is then secure, my Lord!—The *Disinherited* has won the gambler’s trick on Fortune!—not played himself, but kept the Bank—and we,—the poor dull cullies of his art, that found him dupes!—that have worn the livery of shame, for him to take the wages.—We,—that have

courted danger, as the keeper thrusts his head in the roaring lion's mouth for the master showman's profit:—why we,—may hang or starve,—or damn,—‘you care not.’”

“You, Signior Cornaldi, are what at first I found you!—nor more nor less. Your *livery of shame*, if such it be, was worn threadbare long, long ago! The rest are like the words of some demented gentleman, who prattles to his shadow in the glass,—not worth the trouble of an answer.

“I was saying, Signior Kenrick, that it would be well if we were both redeemed from the chances which our lawless association with men of ‘desperate character’ have thrown upon us. The past, to me, is like the memory of some hideous wound; and I would hide the hateful scar that still remains, though at the price of half my fortune! True, I have sinned, but never meanly. The victim of family feud, and next the butt of public scorn, without a

cause ! what wonder then, that, to my young and outraged heart, it was a transport to war against society ! The outlaw's vengeance was a luxury, I own ! and to violate restrictive laws on commerce, which I deemed a tyranny, seemed patriotism. The pelf, the traffic won, was then to me no object ; my plans were wide, were sweeping, and successful ! Denied the field of useful labour and recognized ambition, I thought it honour to achieve the ' difficult,' merely because it was so, and took the spoil, even as a monarch takes his tribute. A happy policy at that time concealed my name, even against my wish ; for the laws I broke were but the artifices of oppression ! Yes, and still I think so ; and, in one sense, I deem the wealth I hold legitimately won. But with the many, who take the ' prejudices ' of the world for what they only ' seem,' and worship them as ' virtues,' I am aware such doctrines pass not current,

and I would have them ignorant of the ‘past,’ merely because I prize the peace and quiet of the ‘present.’

“You say not true, my Lord! Having enough of wealth, with a woman’s weakness you sigh for the honour that the noble ‘House of Montrano’ before had never tarnished, but which a word, a single breath, and that the *lofty* title you have won so dearly may blast for ever! Methinks the very winds that winnow these old walls might find a voice to welcome their *new* Lord! The *Disinherited* no longer; but let shame and foul dishonour register the words in characters as black as hell’s abyss—THE PICAROON!”

The effect on Montrano was as when the blue and hissing thunder-flash hath smote the forest oak, changing its verdure into ashes! so shrunk, so corpse-like, he staggered to the wall, palsied and mad with rage.

A moment, and the brains of Cornaldi had plastered the walls of the corridor; but at that awful crisis, with that strange obtuseness of feeling that nothing but 'habits of business' can inspire, or even explain, Kenrick stepped between the incensed Italians, holding his pocket book in one hand, and an open account, over which he had before been poring, in the other.

"I understand nothing of all this, Gentlemen,"—said the man of commerce, with a grotesque vehemence;

"But I know that this account is one that no man of honour would leave unexamined or unbalanced, before he troubled his head with fighting, or any nonsense of the sort."

The obtrusion of Kenrick's portly person at this instant went as far as his words in the way of pacification; and the whole thing was so dead a balk, that both the belligerents felt disconcerted.

“ Account ! — Honour ! — Balanced ! ” — repeated Montrano, with the vacancy of a man speaking in his sleep, and as unconsciously taking the paper.

“ Very well, very right,”—replied Kenrick, eagerly ;

“ You see, Signior, that this is the direct way to gratify your own wish, and to wind up the affair at once. I am ready to take ‘bills’ on your Yankee agent ; yes, and to save time, I have brought them with me ready drawn. The demand of Signior Cornaldi has been classed with my own in this account ; and if you allow the transfer, it will prevent all future trouble. The vouchers shall be forwarded at any time you wish ; I have them ready, with affidavits to the facts.”

“ You have given yourself a world of trouble,” said Montrano, in a dry sarcastic tone, as, leaning over the lamp, he scrutinized the account, while Cornaldi continued

to view him askance with a lynx-like impatience;—

“A world of trouble; and, allow me to say, most provokingly in vain, for I am not inclined to admit a ‘single item’ without the according ‘*voucher*,’ as to the sales, as they were unauthorised, so shall they remain disowned!—were the auctions real or fictitious, I care not a straw: the first were ‘roguery,’ the second folly,—I will not be the dupe of either! No, Signior, I shall calculate the balance by the values marked on the ‘in-voices,’ nor admit the deduction of a fraction.”

“The noble Lord Montrano turned a costardmonger, and chaffering for the price of herrings! Zounds, I had rather rob a church! than stain my fingers with the stench and soil of counting greasy monies like a usurer’s clerk, who views the ore as precious in itself, and not for the pleasure it may yield. No, my calculations have all

been rapid, short, and final. Pricked out with my rapier's point, clashing the numbers on contending steel, and balancing all fractions with a groan! This, my Lord, is a soldier's arithmetic! I care not for the claims my friend has mentioned,—the simple truth is, that we came here for gold, and we will have it!"

"Is it your pleasure, then, to rob or murder?"—These words were spoken in a careless under-tone, which, as it implied a jeer, nettled the excited Cornaldi past endurance; and, with a thoughtless burst of passion, he shouted eagerly,—

"The *bandit* Cornaldi claims his wages of the *Picaroon* Montrano! What, the word stings like a bounding adder! be it so—
THE PICAROON—MONTRANO!"

The shout re-echoed through the corridor, loud as the wildest surgings of a storm. The lamp flickered, and the old canvas of the pictures shook, until it seemed as

if the long forgotten dead that frowned from that dark wall had shuddered with abhorrence and affright.

Again Montrano stood as one bereft of motion;—the insult rung in his ears like some unreal sound heard in the horror of a dream. This pause was but as the tiger's crouch before her bound !—an instant more and his grasp was on Cornaldi's throat; and despite his struggles, or his weapon, the Count's dagger in next had been buried in his bosom, but that Cornaldi stamped upon the lamp, and found in darkness his best defence.

Some desperate efforts of Cornaldi to force the door, now gave the Count the first idea of his situation; and then again they were grappling in the fury of a mortal contest. Deceived and baffled with the gloom, the only wounds inflicted were such as stung to greater rage;—the Capitano still retreating, and only eager to secure his life.

From the first onset, Kenrick had crouched to the floor, and so ensconced himself in a corner as to be out of harm's way ;—meanwhile Cornaldi, finding no egress towards the staircase, struggled to gain the other end of the corridor ; and in the tumultuous rush that followed, pressed by the weight of both, the spring-lock of the chamber-door gave way, —and presently the combatants were pursuing the phrenzied game of death under that subdued and mellow light that gave a soft voluptuous charm to its magnificence.

Stung with envy and augmented hate at the sight of these new proofs of Montrano's luxury, Cornaldi gained fresh energy ;—the idea of plunder, too, had its influence ; and regardless of the dishonorable odds, for the Count was only armed with a stiletto, he made pass after pass with his rapier, lounging home with what had been indeed a fatal violence, had not Montrano twisted his cloak

around his arm, and thus defended, parried the assault.

Delay but rendered both more vehement and furious, and now with a sudden leap Montrano broke in upon the bandit, and with a wrench disarmed him. Perhaps he had pleaded for his life, but that he noticed Montrano's eyes were become red as glowing fire,—his rage burnt up to madness:—and seeing this, Cornaldi as a last hope clung upon his victim, wrestling as if his muscles were starting from the bones;—but still in vain:—for no sooner had Montrano felt the danger, than he dashed his head against Cornaldi's brow with a stunning violence, and lifting him bodily from the floor, pitched him lifeless as a log upon the bed:—at the next instant the point of the Count's stiletto had grazed on his ribs; when reviving with the flow of blood, he rolled off, and might have risen had not the stab been followed by a second of such force and so fatally

aimed, that it left him neither breath nor life.

No sooner was the horrid deed accomplished, than the Count felt the remorse it might so well excite. He had killed a man—and that but for a word—who had the strongest claims on his forbearance:—and, to increase his perplexity, this had happened when he was most anxious to obliterate the traces of violence ascribed to his character,—when the long-sealed fountains of affection had been re-opened within his heart,—and he had dared to hope for love and happiness.

With the face distorted, and grown livid, while the foam of rage still hung on the yawning jaw,—and the eyes, too, reflected a sullen glare, as if still sensible in death!—the corpse lay at Montrano's feet, hideous as some accusing demon.

‘Concealment!’—Was it possible?—

Montrano turned to the open window, through which the moon yet shed her cold effulgent gleam. There was on that side a deep and solitary pool lying beneath the walls of the castello.

Having secured the door—(a needless precaution, for Kenrick had not stirred an inch)—the Count removed the body to the window; when, as he raised it, a hollow gurgling sound escaped its lips!—Startled and half deceived, he paused. It was no more than an accidental passage of air from the lungs; there was no show, no symptom of returning life:—the head hung back,—and the hands, though limp, were cold,—the wound, too, had ceased to bleed.

One effort more, and the corpse was tumbled from the window, and fell with a heavy splash into the stagnant pool beneath:—the dark green waters closed,—and all was quiet as before.

A sponge and a little water cleared away the ensanguined traces of the late encounter ; and even in the space of a few minutes the Count with a smiling face and an aching heart opened the door, and bade Kenrick advance into the light.

The call was obeyed, but with hesitation and evident alarm, which was soon changed into wonder, when Kenrick perceived that the Capitano was not in the chamber ; this the Count observed, and pointing to the window, he left Kenrick to draw his own conclusion.

“ Very well, very right,—I see how it is, my Lord ; the Capitano has left you in a hurry, and made free with the ivy for a ladder. Well, since he is gone, we will say nothing more of his share of the balance ; and suppose, we throw in a sum on account of the sales, leaving the adjustment for the future. As that young snap-dragon, Cor-

naldi, said, we want gold. The losses mentioned in my letter and other circumstances have made my credit desperate, unless you favour me with some arrangement."

"You must first, Signior, *favour* me with a sight of Hagglegstone's receipt for the portion of Miss Darnley's fortune vested with you, and stated in your letter to have been refunded to him."

"There is a time for all things;"—replied Kenrick, colouring deeply and stopping short, as he saw Montrano's eyes were fixed upon him,—

"I mean, that it is enough to settle one affair at a time:—Friend Hagglegstone is perfectly satisfied, and so am I."

"But I am not!"

Montrano had spoken these words abruptly, but still retaining that artificial smile that he had before assumed, as a mask to the confusion and anguish of his feelings:—

that Judas smile, that proves the villain's passport through the world,—nor less the pharisee's equivalent for virtue!—a smile that ministers to pride, to malice, or revenge;—but never means *or* sympathy, *or* charity, or love.

The Count said not a word beyond, but remained perusing the account with an earnest and deep attention; while Kenrick, who imagined that he was about to settle it, could scarcely restrain his exultation. At last, the smile sunk slowly from Montrano's lip, and his now pallid features began to wear an eager-searching harshness.

“Santo Paolo!”—muttered the Count in an audible whisper;—

“The villany of this paper might have betrayed the sages of Solomon!—Its crafty author shall have full time to brood upon it,—even as the toad increases sweltering in damp and darkness:—

“What ho ! Fazzello !”

Kenrick foresaw the rising storm, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth,—his breath came faint,—and the words he would have uttered died in his throat.

“What ho ! Fazzello !”

The call was loud, but it remained for a while unanswered ; the part of the Castello devoted to the household was remote from the chamber ; and even the half confidential page knew his master’s mood too well not to keep his distance ;—and it was not until Montrano had used more direct means that his object was attained.

“Fazzello, show this gentleman to the Hermitage ; — you understand my meaning :—

“Hark ye, Signior !—Matters of business require *time* and *caution* ; we will talk of your account some six months hence !—perhaps as many years :—say not a word,

or you shall remain until your friend Cornaldi claims your freedom!"—and, with a hollow laugh, Montrano pointed to the window.

Something, perchance a white owl, flitted before it, screaming as it passed;—Montrano shuddered,—and, with a thrill of horrible intuition, the fatal secret at the same moment crossed the brain of the miserable Kenrick;—he raised his hands in an agony of fear, and would have spoken, but that with a ferocious push, strange from one so young and seemingly so gay, Fazzello hurried him below.

Again alone,—and in the silence of midnight, the Count felt his spirit quail under the untoward incidents that had thus involved him with fresh anxieties. Hitherto, his policy had been to rule the agents by whom his plans had been realized by a generosity that left them no motive to betray him;—but,

now, it was evident that he must no less command by fear;—for the comrades of Cornaldi would bear no trifling, and their inquiries as to the disappearance of their chief, would be strict, earnest, and difficult to meet—

“A letter, your Excellenza, brought by one of Cornaldi’s trusty band.”

“Did the messenger inquire for the Capitano, Fazzello?”

“No, my Lord;—but he noticed the horses in the court.”

“Well thought of;—they may create suspicion! Here, Fazzello, take this sword.” (it was the rapier that he had wrested from Cornaldi); and with a careless air he added,

“You understand;—bid the fellow in his ‘*master’s name*’ to leave it with the armourer, on his return: the hilt is loose. Let him too see the horses well fed, and their travelling gear fresh strapped, as if in a hur-

ried readiness to bear his master hence; then give him gold,—and speed him on his homeward route, well filled with food and wine.—Away!”

“Ah! what have we here?—Something from Anselmo;—something that tells me of Carema. I would not trust myself to read it, even in the presence of Fazzello:—her very name alarms my senses with a woman’s weakness. — — Diavolo! he writes of mischief!

“‘All my precautions have been defeated from an accident at sea, which threw us in the way of an English vessel. Miss Darnley’s suspicions have been alarmed; and if I were to land her at Palermo, her first step would be to claim the protection of the British Consul.—In this difficulty I shall try some quiet nook of the main land, when I must depend upon your Eccellenza to find some way to assuage her fears, and to remove her to the castello of the mountains.

“ ‘I would give the world for a dark night, or for a fog!—We lie here, hid under cover of the rocks, and in momentary jeopardy of wreck or capture.—The blue water and the green earth are both grown fatal to Anselmo.’ ”

CHAPTER IX.

“ ——— This gallant, which thou seest,
Was in the wreck ; and but he’s something stain’d
With grief, that’s beauty’s canker, thou might’st call him
A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows,
And strays about to find them.”

THE TEMPEST.

THE efforts made by Blandford and his companions to escape, by cutting the raft clear of the burning wreck, proved altogether fruitless ; and Captain Crant and his gallant fellows must soon have become the plunder

of a swarm of sharks that had gathered to the light, had it not been for the generous aid of the strange sail that had so opportunely hovered in sight.

Of no great burden, for she was a vessel employed in the fruit trade, and only victualled in proportion, there was some risk in taking in so large an addition to her own ship's company, and the decks were soon as black with human heads as a beehive with a swarm.

Already so far encumbered, still greater was the danger of making sail in pursuit of the *Serena*. The idea, however, that the Italian had a lady on board against her will, was no sooner started, than her gallant commander resolved to pack his vessel as close as a snow-ball for the chase, be the peril what it might! But his gallantry was but in vain; the odds in speed were all on the other side. The xebec too had a knowledge of the coast, that gave her a great advan-

tage; and as night came on, by the *ruse* of striking sail at the moment of the counterfeit explosion, and then depending on her sweeps, as observed by Montrano from the balcony of his castello, the Serena eventually escaped.

Who shall portray the feelings of a lover whose mistress is torn from his hopes, and borne away before his eyes, not quite, yet almost within the reach of rescue:—and, if she had escaped death in the sudden loss of the vessel, for what was she reserved?

With thoughts such as these, Blandford grew moody, almost to madness!—It was well indeed that he had so kind and judicious a friend as Captain Crant at hand, to counsel resignation—and fan the faint and almost expiring gleams of hope that still lingered in his bosom.

On arriving in Italy, every effort had been made to ascertain if the boats of the Serena had landed her crew, as the vessel

herself was supposed to have foundered. Enquiries were made too, relative to the Count Montrano, from whom evasive letters had been received,—but the replies on all sides were contradictory and unsatisfactory.

On the whole, it was evident that something more was known than they cared to explain, and that the authorities appealed to had been bribed to silence, or were controlled by fear,—and as Blandford's hopes for Carrema's life increased, his apprehensions for her safety became augmented.

Matters were still in this anxious state when Captain Crant received orders that called him from the shores of Italy, and with the friendly view of arousing Blandford from the benumbing dream of defeated hope, that had so fatally enthralled him, he used every effort to persuade him to accompany him on board his newly appointed ship, which was destined for the West Indian station.

These offers were made often and ur-

gently ;—the opportunity for the investigation and recovery of Frank's paternal property was not forgotten ; and there were times when the arguments in favour of the plan appeared so strong, and the chance of tracing Carema so slight, even if she yet survived, that Frank had almost resigned 'inclination' at the shrine of 'prudence' and consented, but that his misgiving heart again betrayed his judgment with those vague imaginations of future chances of success, that 'love' is always ready to suggest.

At length the day arrived, and Captain Crant having forced upon his friend ample pecuniary means in the shape of a loan, which he gaily promised to enable Frank to repay by the restoration of his fortune, after a silent and hearty pressure of the hand departed.

In Captain Crant, as Blandford felt, he had to mourn a separation from the only friend the world had left him,—a friend,

judicious, warm-hearted, and devoted ;—and yet how strange a thing is passion. This solid advantage was cheerfully resigned for the mere hope of a love, as yet unchallenged ; and depending on chances in themselves perhaps nothing more than the illusions of a heated fancy.

The last vestige of the departing sail had sunk beneath the heaving bosom of the Ocean ; and the cloudless sky glowed with that deep sapphire brightness that gives to southern climes a magic all their own, when Blandford, with the hope of assuaging his over-wrought feelings, feasted his eyes on the city of Palermo ;—its fertile vale of orange groves, and silvery streams, and the wild panorama of mountains that darken round it in a hundred forms ; all picturesque and varied.

The scene was bold,—magnificent, and strange. The dark blue sea sparkling with diamond ripples, and reflecting the wing-

like sails of many a tall xebec. The city smokeless and clear,—but so remote as to seem with all its crowd of palaces and churches, no larger than the pasteboard wonder of a child. The volcanic peaks, cones, and jagged ridges far beyond,—varying in tint from golden gleams of sunny light, to green,—and soft ethereal hues of richest purple. The villas buried amid the chequered shade of elms, and limes, all overhung with clustering grapes ;—and the deep winding lanes with lofty banks richly embowered by the clematus ; the passion flower, and the gigantic climbing rose ;—with here and there a group of old fantastic cork-trees :—and still more beautiful than all in their luxuriant strangeness,—huge lofty aloes, and ancient tree-like cactuses ; crowning a cavernous volcanic hillock near at hand, and obtruding from their limb-like fleshy stems, and leaves of deepest green, their large effulgent flowers of radiant crimson blazing

in the sun,—as if they felt it was a joy to drink his ardent beams.

The splendour of the scene,—and the soft voluptuous charm that hangs in the southern air,—all were lost on Blandford!—From the contrast, his uneasiness indeed became the more imbittered, and with the perverse ingenuity of sorrow, he began to fancy that the young and beautiful object of his untold affections, might but too soon, in this seductive climate, learn to forget,—if not to scorn the sober recollections of her childhood.—And then came other and unbidden thoughts:—Did Carema yet survive?—or, ——

“There are ideas worse than torture, and these are of them!”—Thus saying, Blandford threw himself on the short and mossy turf, and shading his eyes with his hand, fell into a half dreaming reverie, in which his only object was to obtain, if it were possible,—a happy self-forgetfulness.

When the heart is over-fraught with

anxiety, and the excited senses grow wearied and enfeebled in the fever of a long defeated hope,—how sweet and soothing are the silent ministrations of external nature.

The stir of insect life, so prodigal of beauty and zealous in its own vocations, peopling each tuft of grass, as with a colony of brave inhabitants,—all busy in the warm pursuit of interest or of pleasure, even as if they aped at men. A single careless step might crush their myriads in the dust!—But what are these tall human puppets of a day—frail as the insect atoms they despise?—an adverse chance as unforeseen may leave them each to infect the air, a loathsome corpse.

Yes, death in holding all that draw the breath of life in equal vassalage,—may teach us all a charity as wide. The overweening selfishness of human arrogance stands naked in its meanness, exposed and answer-less before the care that God bestows upon the least of his created marvels;—each in its degree

born for the thrill of pleasure and the touch of pain, even as ourselves ! and in its sphere as perfect. What ! if we spurn the least, we thus impeach the Wisdom Infinite that formed the whole !

The mind grows stronger as its faculties unbend, gaining activity from rest ;—and, Blandford, as he left his verdant couch, felt again the warm pulses of a manly hope grow firm in every limb.

The investigation made by his friend, the Captain, on behalf of Carema, had been conducted through the medium of the authorities, and by appeals to men of name and influence :—they had failed, utterly failed, —and now, left without the means of repeating them, Blandford began to feel that, as an unknown individual, he could only depend upon himself,—and that the search for the future must in every sense be one of personal risk and of personal exertion.—The very wish seemed to give the power of execution ;

and Frank began again to feel a touch of happiness, as he registered a silent vow to 'perish or succeed.'

These high resolves were somewhat damped when he returned to the apartments lately occupied by the Captain and himself in the Bagaria, and sat down to his now solitary dinner. The very eagerness of his anxiety produced feelings of mortification and confusion, for he knew not in what quarter to commence his intended search.

At length, wearied with these lonely cogitations, which had done nothing more than to confirm him as to the propriety of keeping his object unknown,—as evening advanced, he wandered down into the city, with the view of taking such chances for amusement as accident might present.

As the friend of Captain Crant, to whom, as a British officer, the first houses of Palermo were open,—society of the higher class

was at his command,—but its uniform *dull* polish, its unmeaning gallantries, and shallow artifice of ‘self-indifference,’ from repetition, were become altogether trite and annoying.

All was in fact too charming to please,—and he wished for something more stimulating!—Something where the sweets and the sour are mingled with a bolder hand, and Dame Nature wears the undress of ‘comfort’ and of ‘sensibility!’—He wished indeed for what he was not very likely to achieve:—for the boisterous vulgarity of ‘low life’ is as irksome as the insipid frivolity of ‘fashion,’ and at last, refusing either,—he chose something worse! and went into a gaming house!

The smell of oil,—the flare of lamps, the rattle of the dice, with volleys of exclamations, while the clink of coin told from time to time that the tables were cleared,—at first gave

the idea of a thoughtless prodigality, amid a mere babble of confusion ; but, a second glance showed a method in the madness of the hour.

As in all such places, the company were of two classes, the experienced, and the reverse. The ‘novice’ eager, passionate, and rash,—the ‘veteran’ self-subdued, keen, and decisive. To Blandford, who beheld the scene with all the zest of novelty, and who had little prejudice, and no excitement in the matter, the frankness of the intercourse was something new and amusing.

The party was obscured by the presence of many, who would not have been deemed admissible elsewhere,—and yet so absolute was the ‘freemasonry of play,’—that a bet was on all sides an efficient introduction, while the payment of a ‘debt of honour’ seemed the compact of an eternal friendship.

The little conversation that passed was singularly candid and direct,—so that it

seemed, that when the supremacy of the purse was duly maintained, that the tongue might have unbridled license; and that the honesty of a man's words were a fair excuse for the profligacy of his conduct.

Many were evidently no more than gamblers by pretence; idlers, to whom the bustle of the scene was an excitement; and who lounged away an hour, rather to avoid expense than to incur it.

As is often the case on the Continent, there were ladies present; and admitting the common-place objections to the habit,—which, by the bye, are all sufficiently true, and equally dull; yet it must be confessed, that the mantling blush on glowing cheeks, and the lightning flash of radiant eyes, have still their influence,—so that hearts are sometimes as readily won and lost, as the glittering dross before them.

There stands a young noble, pale and pensive,—no feature roused, no, not a muscle;

except, that ever and anon, there rises on the lip an aristocratic curve of slight disdain;—and that, the sleepy fall of the eyelids implies abstraction from the present. At his side, with a smile of gay audacity, as if only conscious of his own ‘importance,’ and equally secure from chance of shame or danger, stands a young brigand from the mountains. A fellow who would repeat you a verse from Ariosto as he cuts a throat, and count his rosary with an unwashed hand!

Free in attitude, and muscular as a young antelope, and with a picturesque costume of richest velvet, strung with gold doubloons, in lieu of buttons,—he might pass as a symbol of his country’s spurious lawless energy,—even as that pale scion of her noblesse might show her blighted pride.

It is as if the thistle choked the rose, in some neglected garden, where the richness of the soil might shame the culture:

and so with Italy; what was, and should be, the flower and glory of her social order, are, in the hot-bed of a slavish luxury, grown dry and sapless,—while weeds and funguses, from their very rankness flourish!—grow rampant on the festering carcase of decay, and thrive in desolation.

That diamond cross the bandit dallies in his hand, is grown a puzzle:—shall he throw it as a stake upon the board, and stand his chance for that bright golden heap,—that, did he once possess it, might give him the possession too of her he loves,—in peace and honour. Or, shall he place the glittering toy upon her breast, and leave it there secure, the pledge of that extatic hope that never may be granted.

With faltering voice and burning blush, the fond, enamoured girl, has counselled for the venture!—The tempting jewels flash upon the board,—the stakes are laid; the dice are cast!—as swiftly the adverse number has

been told!—and love and fortune, both are lost.

Pale and motionless, the fair one stands irresolute;—her large full eyes no longer fastening with eager glances from their long fringed lashes on his face, as they would fascinate to love and transport; but sad, and half aversive, they are now communing with the ground. Her lover too, if yet in any sense he so remain, has felt to his heart's core, the base transforming influence of the cast. His hand is on the dagger beneath his vest, and a fierce doubt shoots through his mind, if that keen blade shall seal the fair dissembler his in death,—or, spurning her in proud indifference, he yet will win again the means to woo a bride more 'true,' if not more lovely.

Darkly delicate, and with that innate majesty of mien, that strength of character, when combined with the advantages of birth, inspire,—and after accidents of poverty and

sorrow, cannot all irradiate, at a little distance sat a lady advanced in years, and, in every sense, the last sort of person that might have been expected in such a place.

Grave, even to severity, and absorbed with the chances of the game, as if her life depended on its issue! she remained motionless as a statue; winning without a smile, and calculating on her ivory tablets from time to time, as if some specific sum, yet incomplete, was to be the limit of the irksome sacrifice of feeling and propriety that she endured; for it was evident that she considered both invaded by her present situation.

“ Did you ever see the Lady Cornaldi here before?”

The enquiry was made by an old gamester, of a companion who was standing near Blandford at one of the windows, and smoking a cigar.

“ Never but once,” he replied, stepping

on the balcony, and nodding to the other to follow him, so that they might converse with the greater freedom.

“ Never but once ; and that was many, many years ago, and on the very night that the exiled Lord Montrano came back to Palermo on the death of his father, to find himself disinherited, and a beggar, on the threshold of his home !—yes, without a ducat to buy his supper, he turned in here to try his chance with the blind goddess :—cast his diamond-hilted sword upon the table, and dared us, as we stood around, to stake a third its value against his single chance.

“ He won, and largely :—then risked the gold he had swept, jeering us on, to take his ventures, and still as strangely winning ! Amongst the losers was her late husband, the Signior Cornaldi, then newly married. Flushed with the pride of blood and youth, he chafed upon his losses, and still staked on in desperation, until Montrano in honour

would have shaken him off;—and half in jest, pretended that the title-deed of some estate he offered was incomplete, unless his lady signed it.

“ On the moment, Cornaldi sent a billet by his page to claim her instant presence: swift in the alarm of love, and haste of fear, with looks and dress disordered, a young and blooming bride, fresh from her bed she came.

“ The shock fell on her, sudden as the ‘siroc’ on the rose, but still she bore it bravely. Pallid as marble,—but rather with shame for her heartless husband’s folly, than from anger for the loss of the splendid wealth so madly squandered, she signed the deed in silence; and giving it her husband, with a smile she bade him ‘beware,’—for that ‘she’ had resolved to share the fate of that last venture.

“ The fool in mere bravado lost it!—and from that hour, his young and beauteous wife

spurned him, as if a serpent, from her heart. Nor would she hear of reconciliation, although she bore a boy to mourn this sad estrangement.

“ The father, self-blighted and prematurely old with disappointment, died obscurely. The son, taught and fostered by his mother, became a gallant youth, but with a taste for prodigality beyond her means:—and thus, having fallen on desperate courses, too soon he found a dangerous friend in the Count Montrano; and now they say, that the young Cornaldi heads a band of brigands who infest the other side of the Appennines.

“ Perhaps he is caught, condemned to the galleys or the wheel!—something as bad, depend upon it:—something that demands a sum beyond his mother’s means, or we had never seen her here to-night. Some desperate sorrow eats on her heart to madness!—these walls have been so fatal to her peace, that nothing else had driven her here.”

The conversation ceased; but Blandford continued to watch the Signora Cornaldi with a new and ardent interest: her fate, like his own, had been involved with that of the Count Montrano, and a fresh dawn of promise began to open on his hopes,—“could he gain her confidence?”

The icy air of that noble physiognomy, in which the softer lines of resignation and pity were now too much overshadowed with the dark pencilings of despair, seemed to answer in the negative.

“Could he rouse her woman’s heart to vengeance, if, as he feared, their wrongs were mutual?” — There was a hope in this.

The fortune of the game began to change; —the Signora called for lemonade; but as she drank, her lip grew paler, and the hot blood of agonized suspense glowed in her eyes, until they seemed as lambent gems gleaming beneath the shadowy eyebrows

and the raven tresses that hung between them and the light.

“ Now ! ”—whispered Blandford to himself:—

“ Now is the time to speak :—her self-confidence begins to shake ; the aid she would have spurned may now be welcome ; I’ll probe her with a word ! ”

“ If the Signora Cornaldi would accord the favour, a stranger would request an interview :—he would speak of the Count Montrano.”

Having written these words on a card, and presented them to the Signora, Blandford retired to a vacant part of the room, next to the balcony, to await her leisure,—or at least to notice the effect of his dispatch.

It was sudden and decisive ; her countenance flashed with a light of unexpected joy :—a glance had shown her that the stranger was an Englishman ; and with the

first opportunity she relinquished the game, and approached the spot where Frank was standing.

“Are you the friend of the Count Montrano?”—said the lady in a deep and penetrating tone.

“As the ‘event’ may prove, Signora,”—was the prompt reply.

“The man who enshrouds himself in mystery has seldom much claim on friendship; we hide what we dare not show; I have much to learn of the Count Montrano, and I will sift him to the dross.”

“Hush!”—replied the same clear voice,—
“you speak with an emphasis more bitter than your words: my doubts are the shadows cast from real wrongs, yours, perchance, are but presentiments of those to come!—We sympathize at least in having cause for hatred; a detestation that should ripen to revenge. Meet me to night on the Marino:—the moon goes down at ten; an hour be

yond, and darkness will enshroud the blushes of a mother's shame, and I may speak with boldness,—even as a mother's heart may prompt, although her honour shrinks from the avowal.—Remember, the Marino.”

CHAPTER X.

“The purpose you undertake is dangerous ; the friends you have named uncertain ; the time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition.”

SHAKESPEARE.

DEPENDING on his Italian costume as a means to avoid observation, and having furnished himself with arms, a precaution of at least equal importance, Frank sallied forth to attend the appointed *rendezvous* with the Signora Cornaldi.

The last beams of the sinking moon yet flickered on the upper casements of the more lofty *palazzi*, as the *vettura* dashed through the great square of Palermo, called the ‘Ottangolo,’ and from which, the four principal streets of the city open in long majestic vistas of noble architecture. As the night darkened, the throng of equipages encreased, all making for the ‘Porta Felice,’ where, with a refinement on the national gallantry, the torches are ordered to be extinguished ; and the domestics wait in crowds, while the noblesse and gentry enter alone to revel in the voluptuous enjoyment of their noble public walk, the cool and dusky ‘Marino.’

There, the luscious breathings of the softest music mingle with the sighs of beauty ; nor are the stars of that deep azure vault more clearly bright, than the sparkling eyes that shed below the enchanting light of passion.

Notwithstanding the interest of the coming interview, Frank had no sooner escaped from the outward glare of torches, and the din of voices, into the dim obscurity of this privileged elysium, than its fascination stole like a charm upon his senses; the eye and the heart were equally enchanted, and he forgot the future in the present.

On the one side the embattled wall of the city frowned with the sombre grandeur of a long and deep perspective, while a tranquil sea slept in a solemn calm beneath its far extended shadow. With a hollow murmuring cadence, the slow progressive heave of the mighty waters broke in phosphoric flashes on the strand, while the dark offing arose beyond, as if it had been a vast and solid arch of emerald, shining faintly to the midnight sky.

The extensive promenade of the Marino was already thronged; but all was so dusky that, as the passing crowds co-mingled, the

black cloaks of the cavaliers were hardly to be distinguished from the rich brocades of the female pilgrims to that favourite shrine of pleasure.

Full of frolic, fun, and mischief, here and there, the parties gathered, until the pressure to the timid seemed alarming; and soft entreaties broke forth to outcries, that were half in earnest.

Many of both sexes were masked, which, if it gave a license to the treacheries of love, added zest to the gay flirtations of the hour, strangers and friends associating without distinction; to the perpetration of peccadillos numberless! the betrayal of secrets, and that infinite deal of 'scandal,' which, adding the follies of truth to the *piquant* dreams of fancy, is the all delicious manna of provincial society.

Perhaps, from its having been discovered that he was a stranger, or, as it might have been, from mere accident, Blandford had

hardly passed fifty yards in advance, when he became entangled in one of those sportive crowds that we have described.

Right and left, the living wave came flowing in; and, in reality so sedate in their fun, and so gracefully gentle are the Italians in their movements, that the expression is hardly a metaphor; every rule has, however, its exceptions, and the calmest seas their storms.

Aware that some jest was in motion, though not suspecting that its point was centred in himself, Blandford remained entirely passive; and with no very great stretch of philosophy either, as the immediate pressure was inflicted by two of the finest women in the group.

These involuntary charmers were masked; but with proofs so palpable, it had been worse than heresy to have doubted of their beauty: and Frank had begun to feel an interest in the soft whispers of alarmed timidity that passed between them, when his attention

was still more excited by the dilemma of a young girl on the right, whom two cavaliers had hurried into the crush, and were then rudely attempting to veil with their cloaks. Her struggles were becoming too real to be mistaken ; and now as her white and finely moulded arms were thrown into the air with a frantic vehemence, a half stifled cry escaped her.

Frank flew to the rescue:—the assailants slunk away ; and, as the crowd opened, he discovered the object of his solicitude to be a young signora of about seventeen, who expressed her thanks with a modest confusion, which made the imperfect light the more tantalizing, as it rendered her features indistinct, while it left the elegant outlines of a form of unusual grace sufficiently apparent.

“What a fuss with a trumpery *ballerina* !”—muttered a sullen voice from the other side of the crowd. The maiden’s mantle

had fallen in the struggle, and Frank observed that the assertion was probably correct, as the accident had left her exposed to the public gaze in a fancy costume, that betrayed her finely developed form rather more distinctly than she might have wished; in fact, she was dressed for the stage, and had wrapped up with the hope of passing unnoticed through the company.

“*Ballerina* or not,”—replied a female voice,—

“She is the admiration of the young Cornaldi! had he been present, the boldest man in Palermo had not dared to flout her with a word!”

Blandford looked around, but the speaker was concealed by the persons before her; and, in the interval, the little dancer had contrived to slip altogether out of sight. The momentary bustle too had died away; and he wandered forward in utter loneliness and silence.

Presently, a burst of music gave notice that the curtain of the pavilion was about to rise, and as the stragglers gathered into an audience, the *balletto* commenced. The subject was one peculiarly appropriate to the spot,—the abduction of Proserpina.

The enamoured god was at first whimsically introduced as a flippant cavalier, who essayed a thousand protestations, but all in vain; while the obdurate fair one met his advances with a gay indifference; devoting all her care to a wreath of flowers, that seemed to gain fresh beauty as her lovely hands entwined them.

Suddenly, a treacherous thorn had pricked her, and she cast away the rose disdainfully, declaring it as odious as her too officious swain. The offended god took up the flower, and, invoking Venus to avenge her slighted emblem,—at once a magic change possessed the air! Proserpina slumbered; the

past seemed but as a dream,—and, wrapped in a rosy cloud, vast, dim, and unsubstantial as a shadow, the angry Pluto threatened vengeance with a smile of triumph.

The vision vanished as the light receded; but soon the mist dissolved; and, with the coming day, the scene was changed:—it was now that of the ravishment, and equally effective.

To a symphony of sweet seductive sounds, opened an entrancing view of the blooming shores of Sicily, with *Ætna* frowning darkly in the back ground. There, on a terrace of verdant turf, gambolled the maidens of the ancient story, with their sylvan queen, the peerless *Proserpina*, who was, as before, personified by the beautiful girl that Frank had rescued.

A light capricious grace enshrined her, as she stood beaming in smiles of innocence

and soft delight, while the attendant nymphs that moved in homage round, were all that love can dream of beauty.

The evolutions of the dance grew rapid in the wild abandonment of joy ; and all that sculpture reveals of grace in the cold and unimpassioned marble, was present to the eye, and maddened at the heart, in life's warm bright reality !—but transient all, as summer lightnings flashing on the evening sky, even fading as they rise. Some new and daring changes gave to the dance that wild and bacchanalian air that Poussin paints so well ; when, as if to veil the mystic scene that in its tumult verged on ecstasy, a sudden gloom prevailed, crossed with streaks of a red and angry light from the burning mountain in the distance. Lit by this lurid glare, the forms of the dancers assumed a deep metallic lustre ; and soon, as if this strange transforming influence could

no less create ! their number seemed augmented, the minions of the god,—the ravishers have mingled with them in disguise !—and now, amid shrill frantic outcries, borne up aloft on Pluto's giant arm, and in her struggles still more beautiful, the affrighted Proserpina is hurried off,—the wild and sobbing music echoing to their woe ; and muttering thunders rolling far and deep, as darkness swallows up the scene.

“ Bravissimo ! ” shouted a hundred voices at a breath ;—

“ *Santa Maria !* but she is a dainty *danzante*, that young Gabrelli :—the *balletto*, too, know you the author, Signior ? ”

“ Bah ! all the world knows that it is one of Cornaldi's fancies, as wild and daring as himself ;—but walk aside, and you shall hear of something better.”

This ‘ walking aside ’—brought the parties, two rusty and rather sinister-looking signori

of the sword, completely behind Blandford ; so that every word they uttered was of necessity overheard.

“ Presto ! the secret ! — Cornaldi and Montrano cannot but quarrel. The Capitano has had orders to disband the Troop, because that the Count, having a full purse, can live without them ;—but not so Cornaldi ; his desperate fortunes can only be propped by the sword.

“ He depends upon his Band ; and they depend upon the name, the advice, and the secret protection of the Count.”

“ Protection ! ”

“ Yes !—I could name one, if I chose, who has had good cause to know it. There is not, let me tell you, a dungeon-keep in all Italy, but that the Count has got a key that will pass its tightest ward.

“ Now, would you believe it,—the Count is be-deviled with a touch of his old distemper ; and, like a second St. Anthony,

he hath a temptation from the sex. What follows? Why, that he would discard the black demon with the ugly name, though to him he owes his fortune, for the white one, that only teaches men in every sense to lose! a ‘woman.’”

“Fie, Signior!—you speak without experience;—no woman has ever taken the trouble to steal your heart, or you would not thus belie the sex.”

“Well, with his usual fantastic wilfulness, the Count has fallen in love with a *charmeuse* he has never beheld; has managed to steal her with her own consent; and as caged birds sing at last in very weariness of self, so will he cheat her into love. He knows the human heart as if its feelings were the strings of some sweet instrument, and will tune them to his purpose,—however loud and harsh their discords.”

Frank held his breath,—the very blood

seemed to settle at his heart ;—and yet, with a moment's thought, he felt his bosom lightened of half its load :—the remark had been made with all the confidence of knowledge ; and if so, there was 'time.'—The object of Montrano was to allure Carema's affections no less than to possess her person :—to woo her ; could he win her ? Never ! At least so thought her lover.

At this moment Blandford felt a cold hand pressed upon his own ; and looking up, he beheld the pale and commanding countenance of the Signora Cornaldi.

“ I have not met you earlier, Signior, because I would not have my sorrows blight the pleasures of the evening ; but these are passed,—and the star of morning will soon shine on the Marino, empty, desolate, and silent. Then, Signior, we shall be private ; and yet what have I to conceal ? The legends of dishonour are emblazoned on the

winds ;—the idle school-boy chawks them on the walls ;—and drivelling idiots, who own no other sense, can speak them plainly.

“ Yes ; my poor boy’s follies—would to Heaven I need not add his crimes—are trumpeted too widely. His generosity, his mild affection, his constancy in love, and quenchless valour,—these are all forgotten ; or only marked for jest and mockery :—the virtues of a bandit, in the estimation of the world, add but insolence to vice ; and, perhaps at best, they are but as the flowers thrown upon a corpse, whose very freshness hastens its decay.

“ There was a time, Signior, when to have spoken thus, my tongue had blistered ;—when, in haughtiness of heart, I thought to have scorned the criminal, although I viewed him in a son :—but this was a delusion ;—maternal feelings triumph,—and as a pilot, to save his crew, runs the storm-harrowed bark upon the strand, so may the

treasured reputation of my life be shipwrecked, so may it perish! if I but save my child. It was for this you saw me gamble. I, as a lonely woman, spurned or pitied as the mood may suit,—I have no friend;—and, as I wanted gold, no other chance but periling my jewels to the dice.”

However deeply Blandford at any other time might have sympathized with the afflicted Signora, his impatience to learn something of the present views of Montrano, made him break through her impassioned discourse with eager questions; when he was again surprised to find that the Count’s extravagant love for Carema was alluded to as a matter familiar to his partizans; and as the probable cause of that change of conduct that might prove fatal to her son, who had lately, as she said, mysteriously disappeared.

To Blandford’s suggestion, that it would

be well to appeal to the law, and hunt the lordly aggressor from his mountain hold with a file of musketeers,—her answer was short and sufficient;—her son was himself an outlaw.

Plans for ransom, expostulation, or intreaty, were shown to be equally futile, if used as means for the recovery of Cornaldi, as they could not but be, if devoted to the service of Carema.

Surrounded by watchful retainers, and a local population of mountaineers devoted to his interest, the attempt of an individual to approach him by stratagem or force would be absurd.

The plan of bribing Cornaldi's band to the rescue of their leader against Montrano, whom they had idolized, and of whom they had no less a superstitious dread,—was almost too desperate to admit of argument; and yet it was one on which the widowed mother had grounded all her hopes.

For this purpose, she had possessed herself of gold ; and had resolved to visit them in their secret holds, and to provoke, and bribe them to revenge.

Long and warily was this plan discussed by Blandford, who pointed out its hazards and insufficiency, but in vain ; the overwrought enthusiasm of the Signora would brook no check, and with every difficulty her zeal augmented.

Perplexed and mortified to find this last hope fading away in a dream of extravagant anticipations, he was on the point of explaining his own inability of executing that share of the enterprise which she would have allotted to his care, when the recollection of the conversation he had overheard relative to the young Cornaldi's love for the fair Gabrelli flashed upon his mind, and with it arose the idea of a stratagem more feasible.

The operatic corps, whose performance of

the balletto had just delighted him, were in the habit of passing from town to town, and of occasionally offering their services to the noblesse, as a means of dissipating the ennui of their country retirements. Was it not probable, then, that Montrano might gladly receive a visit from these light-hearted troops of Momus, at a time when he must be anxious to conciliate the feelings of his beautiful and deluded guest with the show of gaiety and the thoughts of pleasure.

The ready brain of the Signora caught the impression as eagerly ; and notwithstanding an unwillingness in any way to sanction the loves of her son and the too charming *artiste*, her fears for his safety prevailed, and she entered into the details of the proposed *ruse* with all the avidity of her nature.

Could the gay and volatile comedians be entrusted with a plot so formidable, as one that would carry disaster into the very

home of the dreaded Montrano?—Certainly not, nor was it needful; the professional object of the visit was in itself a sufficient explanation, as far as the greater number were concerned; the few in whom it was absolutely necessary to confide, must, it was evident, be bribed, and that heavily. For this the Signora had sufficient means; and, above all, it was to be remembered, that the young and fervent Gabrelli would be devoted heart and soul to the enterprize! while two or three of Cornaldi's followers were to be employed as circumstances might require. The Signora would remain at a distance to forward the necessary sums of money that might from time to time be required, and which it would be unsafe to place in the hands of the parties in the first instance:—she might also prepare places of concealment, if such should become necessary; and in fact, all was assuming an aspect that gave some confidence of success, when the obstacles that

would attend Blandford, if he attempted to join the party, stared him full in the face as insurmountable,—as far as his own hopes were embarked in the adventure.

As a stranger and a foreigner, he knew not how to join them in any way that would not excite suspicion and alarm; nor could the Signora help him out of the difficulty. Disguises, in the common sense of the term, were unequal to the purpose,—and the expedient that at last presented itself, was one not likely to prove particularly palatable in the execution if attempted.

“There is,”—said the Signora, after a long reverie, for she was become almost hopeless of the matter.

“There is a dumb and half-demented German, lately arrived at Palermo, of most eccentric habits:—grotesque by nature, and with an odd dry taste for mimicry; this fellow has been the hired buffoon of many a troop of *saltimbanques*; he seeks employ-

ment now ; and if you, Signior, could condescend to counterfeit this strange abortion of a man ?”

Frank’s answer was in the affirmative.

“ Then, Signior, the difficulty is solved ;—a little observation, and the hideous oddities of this German may be assumed, his strange unearthly manner too with practice.—As a buffoon, they have already thought of engaging him ; a word to Gabrelli, and it shall be done : you, Signora, shall fill his place,—and then, the proud Montrano shall be foiled with his own weapons—confounded and deceived.”

CHAPTER XI.

Oh, what may man within him hide,
Tho' angel on the outward side !
How may such likeness made in crimes,
Making practice on the times,
Draw with idle spider's strings,
Most pond'rous and substantial things !

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

ORIGINALLY a cavern, and deep beneath the rocky base of the castello, lay an ancient and long deserted hermitage, which, by Montrano's orders, had been used as a prison. For this purpose the natural archway in the front, which opened on a dry foss, had been

blocked up by a massy wall, pierced with two small port-hole-like windows; and the feeble light which struggled through them was merely sufficient to show the different tints of weather-stain that covered the damp flags of the floor, and the grey and yellow lichens that hung from the dripping sides. The only articles of the interior that told of human habitation,—were a low bench, an oaken table, mildewed by age and moisture, with a stump bedstead, of equally forbidding aspect, or, even more so,—from the number of rank funguses that grew beneath it, and sheltered a colony of toads.

Immediately before a cavernous recess at the further end, and relieved by its perfect darkness, stood a wooden crucifix carved and painted, with a startling and hideous air of reality!—The contorted and blood-stained limbs seemed as if recently racked with the lingering cramps of that revolting death!—and the eyes too, shone with a glassy va-

cancy, as if the parting groan had hardly past.

Such was the loathsome den into which the haughty, and self-indulgent Kenrick had been thrust:—nor was his jailor, Bagolio, a wit more prepossessing!

Imagine, a man of some thirty years of age, but prematurely old from habits of excessive indolence; one, who seemed even to sleep as he walked,—and whose senses, when aroused, were so cold and obdurate, as to convey the idea of a moral petrefaction!—A man insensible to the touch of pity,—and to whom oppression was a luxury, simply because it brought down others more to an equality with himself! and destroyed the gaiety and comfort that mocked his own dull apathy. Still the fellow had courage; and in his way was something of a stoic; and that even so far, that if circumstances had shaped Bagolio into a General, —or a Political Economist! no man, as the

first, would have viewed a field of slaughter with a more ‘glorious’ indifference,—or, as the second, would have calculated the depopulating influence of insufficient diet and mental suffering on a union of paupers, with a more ‘philosophical’ satisfaction. But Bagolio was something more than these, without the trouble of their vocation:—in his own domain, the prison, he was absolute! and could indulge his taste for witnessing the sufferings, or the death of his victims, without the care of inflicting either,—for the place itself was so solitary, revolting, and unwholesome, that such consequences soon followed as a natural sequence.

The connexion of Bagolio with this occupation was in some sort a mystery, for he had evidently a passion for the office! and among other things it was said, that his lethargic stupidity was assumed, that he might not be put to any more active employment. This, though a shrewd guess, was

a false one ! — there was another mystery, and the second solved the first ! — Bagolio had no ostensible father. The last recluse, as secret legends told, was not emaculate ; — his icy vows had thawed before the sunny smiles of beauty, notwithstanding his lonely life and enthusiastic attachment to the hermitage. It had been whispered, that a lambkin of his flock, the black-eyed Beatrice, though *sans doute* as naughty as a warm and giddy heart could make her, was shrieved in a shorter time by half than any of her companions ! — and why ? — The holy *Padre* knew ‘ half ’ her trespasses before hand ! After some time Beatrice bore a son marvelously like His Reverence, — an accident of ‘ course ’ arising from her humble veneration of the church ; — and by ‘ accident too,’ the holy *Padre* took a fancy to the boy, who grew up with a superstitious regard to the hermitage ; and when it was made a prison, and rendered damp and unwholesome, he

built himself a hut against its outward wall, and gladly accepted the office of its keeper.

With the weary habits of a man of business, Kenrick no sooner found himself immured in this desolate abode, than he began to calculate the future from the past,—and soon ascertained that he had little reason to lean on hope. He had mistaken Montrano's character ; and, in supposing him unacquainted with mercantile affairs and open to delusion, he had blundered on his own destruction. Had Montrano continued the reckless debauchee his youth had promised, the fraudulent account might have passed unchallenged ; and if so, the Count's signature to the 'prepared' papers would have given Kenrick an opportunity of plundering his fortune to a severe extent. The maternal property of Carema, which from feelings of remorse Montrano had taken pains to augment, would have been the first sacrifice ; and the intended fraud in this sense was

beyond all hope of pardon. Kenrick thought not of this ; but as he knew that the Count had resolved to assume the garb of reformation, he concluded that any mode of getting rid of his old associates would be welcome ; and if so, what chance remained for Kenrick ? absolutely none.

The chances for *life* were another consideration ; and as Kenrick had observed that his dungeon lay at the far side of a ruined curtain of the castello, which seemed to have no residents but the bats, and to be interdicted ground to all except his scarcely human jailer, they resolved themselves into two ;—the good pleasure of the Lord Montrano (which was likely to be ‘ bad ’ enough in his case), and the recollection of the half-demented being, on whom he depended for daily sustenance.

The massy wall, the well-secured windows, and heavy, studded-door, were beyond all hope of penetration. It was evident, therefore,

that the only chance would be with Bagolio ; and when the forbidding attributes of that strange personage were considered, together with the fact, that he never entered the dungeon, but passed the prisoner's food through a slide contrived for such a purpose, any expectation in that quarter seemed futile and desperate.

At last, even Kenrick began to think so ; and with the wish for escape as strong as ever, he felt a crushing weight of impotence that threw him into fits of abstraction so frequently, that they bade fair to terminate in melancholy madness. At such times it was his wont to stand leaning against a rocky projection, with his arms folded and his eyes fixed upon the ground, rigid and motionless as a statue. The very regularity and frequency of the attitude at length excited the curiosity of Bagolio ; and having thrust through the allowance for the day, he would remain, for perhaps an hour 'at a

time, with his chin resting on the floor of the hole cut for the slide,—his little eyes twinkling with suspicious wonder, and the sallow, parchment-like skin of his blank, square visage, corrugated strangely ever and anon, with a rabbit-like grimace, as he twirled his nose forward, and munched, as if devouring his own thoughts, with a silent satisfaction.

This occurred too often not to be observed by Kenrick, who saw at once that he was become an object of interest,—and who resolved to increase the impression, trusting to time for the chance of turning it to advantage.

It was odd; but ‘silence’ had prevailed, when all sorts of appeals, from the gay to the pathetic, had utterly failed; none having obtained even a grunt of commiseration from the obdurate monster on whom he depended. The idea, too, gave him occupation; which, by the bye, is as essential to the health of

the mind, as air is to the lungs; and Kenrick became an altered man. The coarse food, before hardly to be tolerated, except at the call of extreme hunger, was now expected with avidity, as with it came the opportunity of essaying some new experiment in the art of 'fascination.'

And still Bagolio lingered and gazed,—his curiosity waxing stronger and stronger,—until at last his unmeaning mastications would have been exchanged for words, had not silence been enjoined by fear and duty. In the meanwhile, Kenrick took especial care to add to his bewilderment; until in a lucky moment, a whim seized him to play the astrologer, for which the solemnity of his previous trance-like meditations had formed an appropriate prelude.

A taste for the mysterious is certainly inherent in our nature;—and the vulgar of the higher and lower ranks are never more

happy than when their credulity is in active exercise. Kenrick had enjoyed some profitable practice in this way among the fanatics at home, and he went to work with all the confidence of an adept. The false seeming of a conjuror and a hypocrite he knew were on a par, and he flattered himself with the hope, that the all-commanding influence that the deluder ever obtains over the deluded, might in some unforeseen way achieve his dearest wishes.

No man could have a more orthodox belief in the ‘diabolical’ and ‘supernatural’ than Bagolio;—and precisely in ratio with the number of magical devices inscribed by Kenrick on the floor, and the frequency of his trances, starts, and fits, became the jailer’s awe and respect for Kenrick; until at last, under the sanction of the aphorism, that “it is well to have a *friend* at court,” Bagolio, who had no longer any doubt but

that his prisoner had a private understanding with His Sulphuric Highness the Devil, became all complaisance and kindness.

Not that he ever spoke;—no; the fear of a red-hot wire through the tongue was a sufficient balk for that:—but then he could slip sundry flasks of wine and a pair of thick blankets down the slide; and these ‘creature comforts’ were not only good in themselves,—but they were as the view of Moses from Mount Pisgah, to Kenrick,—they promised better things.

But let us not imagine that such alleviations of the evils of his confinement, or even the hope of escape, were sufficient to allay those stings of conscience that the guilty Kenrick had so long endured. The mind that would rid itself of “that perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart,” must first of all be purified with the dews of repentance. Not that unavailing grief that is in itself but an indulgence of undue excite-

ment,—but that practical amendment which attempts to remove the effects of past injuries by present benefits, and would cheerfully submit to suffering and privation to obtain its object.

Of such generous emotions the sordid breast of Kenrick was utterly incapable ; and when the thoughts of the past fell like poisoned arrows in his way, they stung most deeply, under the view that he had not the chance of profiting from the seeds of iniquity he had left behind him.

The plan which he had laid down for the embezzlement of Frank's West Indian property was not as yet matured ; “ though much was done, yet more remained to do ; ” and he felt that it was most likely that communications on that subject, and directed to him at Bristol, would fatally miscarry. The private papers, too, which had been found upon him, and which had doubtless been taken advantage of by the Count,—

these would at once unmask his intended fraud in connexion with the claim he had advanced for compensation on the property lost in the Blowzy Bess, and by the fire.

On the whole, all villain as he was,—Kenrick felt confounded and amazed at the complete picture of perfidy, which, as he was aware, his conduct must now present to the eyes of his late associates. The cloak of hypocrisy that he had so long worn, was in a moment torn away; and, as he contemplated the naked deformity in which he stood before them,—he felt not only still more the necessity of escape, but the thirst of a remorseless revenge; not that for injuries suffered: but that of hatred and of fear:—and he resolved that, if his plan for practising on the credulity of Bagolio succeeded, his first care on the recovery of his freedom, should be an attempt on the lives of Montrano and Anselmo; for he felt that while either survived, he had no chance of re-

taining the large sums which his speculations had enabled him to amass.

Not that Kenrick had the most remote idea of venturing on any personal deed of violence:—No; his object was to hire assassins for his purpose; and as he sat by the low and flickering lamp of his dungeon, he actually chuckled with delight, as he remembered that two or three of the bandits, whom Cornaldi had pointed out to his notice as blood-thirsty miscreants, of whom he intended to weed his troop on the first opportunity, — were bravos ready made to his hand!

The necessary funds for his purpose too, if once again he breathed the air of freedom, would be within his power;—for with the mean fore-sight of a guilty mind, he had taken the precaution to bury a considerable sum at a small town on the coast at which he had for some time resided; and although the expenditure of money was to Kenrick

as repulsive as the fabled self-immolation of the brooding pelican,—yet he resolved to venture it to the last pistole, rather than to suffer the defeat which present circumstances could not but involve.

With these projects, he felt every hour of his detention as an age,—and yet to practise his new device of conjuration to advantage, the greatest circumspection and assumed tranquillity of mind were required; and very fortunately this was in itself a severe punishment to Kenrick, whose proud overbearing spirit could ill brook the quiet and cautious self-control that it required to conduct the solemn mummeries that were suited to his purpose. The smooth but thoughtful brow;—the rapt glance, that seemed unconscious of the present while it read the future;—the smile of self-satisfied assumption:—all these were fetters of the mind, that galled the rough and wilful Kenrick to the quick. And then the uncertainty as to the time it

might require to juggle and mystify the senses of Bagolio sufficiently for his purpose,—these were soul-sickening recollections; and although Kenrick fared sumptuously every day, yet the mental vassilage of his new vocation, was every hour becoming the more galling; and no galley-slave chained to the bench on which he toiled, had ever felt more self-subdued and wretched.

And yet his plan had in one sense succeeded! The superstitious Bagolio was becoming more and more enthralled, and it was evident that his awe of his extraordinary prisoner was as boundless as the extent of his own ignorance. But Kenrick saw with infinite alarm, that while he seemed anxious to propitiate his favor by furnishing every indulgence within his power, yet that his vigilance in the execution of his office seemed to be augmented in proportion.

In fact, Bagolio looked on his prisoner as a child may pet a serpent, or a toad,—at

a safe distance, and without the least idea of removing the reptile from its hole.

Overwhelmed with this new and horrible idea, Kenrick's subtle brain became immediately busied in a variety of schemes to circumvent Bagolio; and the one that finally absorbed his attention was well worthy of the cold and cruel heart that was eager for its perpetration.

This design required an instrument,—a something however small and trifling, that might serve the purpose of a weapon;—and here was the difficulty, for the prisoner had been most carefully precluded from the use of any thing of the sort.

For two days had Kenrick searched every hole and cranny of his dungeon for any broken staple or other fragment of old iron that his ingenuity might shape into a weapon; but in vain. On the third night, however, the idea crossed his brain that something of the sort might probably be attached

to the crucifix,—and snatching up his lamp, he advanced to examine it.

The light he bore was feeble, and as he approached the black and hollow chasm of the rock in which the figure had been placed, Kenrick felt an involuntary chill,—a tremor shook his hand; the dull flame flickered as he bore it,—and the saintly visage depending from the cross, seemed looking down upon him from beneath the coronet of blood-stained thorns, with a look of patient sorrow mingled with a life-consuming agony that chilled the very marrow in his limbs. The murderous intention on his mind seemed stamped as it were by the eye of Heaven on his soul, with the burning pungency of glowing iron; and the enormity of his own wickedness seemed as if it might open a ready hell beneath his feet.

Kenrick recovered himself with the dogged resolution of his nature,—and with the hope of escaping the fascination that had

before overtaken him, he resolved that he would not again raise his eyes beyond the lower part of the figure.

He had remembered that some large spike-like nails were driven through the feet, and his object was to shake one of them out,—a matter, as he expected, of easy accomplishment; and he had almost got his hand upon it for that purpose, when a fresh sense of terror overwhelmed him with all the force of a reality.

The naked limbs upon the cross, before dim and shadowy, were suddenly become bright and distinct, as if seen in the noon-tide glare of day! and as Kenrick looked up in speechless fear, the eyes seemed animate with life.

Grown half mad with terror, Kenrick might have fallen,—had he not at the moment been seized by one who dragged him violently backwards; and, on turning round he found himself in the grasp of Bagolio,

who, although still silent, was evidently incensed and shocked beyond measure, having interrupted the prisoner, as he thought, in a sacrilegious attempt to injure the sacred symbol of his faith.

Still bewildered with horror and alarm, Kenrick looked beyond, and as he beheld two men with partisans and torches at the door, he concluded that the object was to take his life; and he was about to make some desperate effort of resistance, when a peal of hearty laughter broke on his astonished ear! and the fairy form of a young and beautiful girl flitted before him for an instant,—in the next all was gone, and he was left in darkness and alone.

CHAPTER XII.

“ What shall he be ere night ?—perchance a thing
O’er which the raven flaps her funeral wing :
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt,
While sets that sun, and dews of evening melt,
Chill—wet—and misty round each stiffened limb,
Refreshing earth,—reviving all but him.”

BYRON.

ALARMED and perplexed by the unexpected and untoward incidents of her voyage, Carema experienced more than the usual joy of those who escape from the flying prison

of the wide waters, in finding herself again on shore.

The novelty and beauty of the scenery helped, too, to dissipate the oppression that still lingered on her mind, while the wild gaiety of the too fascinating Madalena, on again treading her native soil, had a contagious influence; and Carema began to feel, with a thrill of proud delight, that she too was an Italian!

The full pulses of youth glowed with a warmer relish; the soft and balmy air, rich with the perfume of the citron and the myrtle, inspired a new and more delicious sense of life! while the purple peaks of the neighbouring Appennines were in themselves a poetry, and a never failing feast to the excited imagination of the fair traveller, who was about to penetrate their shadowy recesses.

With the refined caution which ever marked his policy, Montrano had avoided a

premature interview with the object of his wishes; and, instead of going himself to meet her on the coast, after having been informed by Anselmo that it would not be practical to land her at Palermo, he confided her to the care of the trusty Fazzello, who, with a strong escort, had orders to await her arrival, and to conduct her over the mountains to the half dilapidated castle we have described.

The parting between Anselmo and Madalena, (for the former could not relinquish the command of the Xebec), was in that tone of sentimental regret, common to lovers that are only separated to meet again for the bridal,—who smile and sigh with that sweet sorrow, that from its source becomes a luxury;—giving, by contrast, a more delicate refinement to the thrilling anticipations of the future.

Such was their parting; and the kiss that sealed it, was one of those that the heart

stands still to register, when eager lips have but one breath of life, and flashing eyes tell more than words can utter.

A glow of manly excitement yet lingered in the bronze-tinted countenance of the bold seaman, as he advanced to take leave of Carema;—when, as if checked with some sudden consciousness, his cheek turned pale, and the few words that he found breath to utter, became half indistinct.

Carema trembled;—she knew not why, and yet a strange feeling of dread possessed her; and as Anselmo mentioned “Montrano,” she repeated the name unconsciously, as if her voice had been an echo, and in a tone feeble and hollow, as if the dead had spoken.

A moment after, and she was entwined in the arms of Madalena, who was glad to hide her blushes in the bosom of her friend, and with the excitement, the cloud of past anxiety had fled like an April shower.

The journey was the next object, and the horses of the armed attendants were become restless with the delay, when Carema made the awkward discovery, that she was expected to ride without a saddle, or rather, without a *side* saddle,—which, to a lady with English habits and ideas, is much the same sort of matter.

The gay Madalena had already set the example, and that in a moment,—and with a bound that would have passed at Astley's; and now supported by the *cusino*, in a half recumbent position, and with a delicate little foot and ankle peering out on either side over the shoulders of her steed, she was quite the ton as an Italian horsewoman.

Necessity is an excellent 'Master of the Ceremonies,' when inclination is turning restive,—and thus feeling that it would be quite as awkward to explain her objection as to try the experiment, and submit to the inconvenience, if such it might prove;—flushed

to the temples, and with a fearful glance from right to left, Carema ventured 'manfully' on her seat, *cavalcione*,—and giving the noble horse his head, passed forward.

Every country has its distinguishing features; its physical peculiarities; which give the impress of what is called the 'national character,' and as the same causes operate on the foreigner, he gains insensibly something of the native style, and begins to find that what he at first viewed as prejudices, become at last his own spontaneous feelings.

Thus, as Carema inhaled the keen elastic breeze of the Appennines, and remarked the clear deep shadows of their opening glens, where objects far remote seem present in a strange distinctness,—and Nature wears a bright and penetrating aspect, dashed with a stern sublimity,—a haggard boldness, as if she felt secure in the force of her own energies, when as thus untrammelled by the

feeble bonds of human usage and caprice.

While gazing on scenery such as this, Carema felt that innate love of enterprise that betokens strength of mind,—and a contempt of danger and restraint, awakening as it were from a long slumber in her own bosom. And shall it be confessed,—that notwithstanding her high and constant sense of honour, there came a feeling too of indulgence,—half of liking, towards the dark and dangerous features of the land, until, like the enormous reptiles of a tropic glen, they seemed the fitting growth of such a soil; giving to its rich entrancing beauty, the contrast of the terrible and grand.

From the influence of such emotions, the forebodings of a something sinister and strange in the character of Montrano, that, in spite of Madalena's wish, had been suggested by her often broken and incoherent stories in

his praise, became softened ;—and if a tinge of awe remained in Carema's mind at the contemplation of her coming interview with the Count, it was counterbalanced by a strong curiosity to behold this unknown friend :—this 'lonely enthusiast,' who lived, as Madalena termed it, 'like a feudal monarch, away from the world, in the bosom of the mountains.'

Long and arduous were the efforts of the horses in surmounting the rugged road, that winding up a series of natural terraces, formed the first part of the journey. The armed attendants had dismounted to relieve their cattle, and two of them led the horses of the ladies through the more difficult passes.

Selected for growth and power, the tall and muscular forms of these fellows were seen to advantage, as with strong, untired steps, they clambered forward, each with his carbine

slung, his high-crowned hat, with slouched brim and feather,—his cloak, velvet jacket, embroidered lower dress, and low jack boots.

Nothing indeed could be more in unison with the vast and savage scenery that frowned around,—or more picturesque or charming in its way, than the appearance of the group ; except, indeed, that it might have been *mistaken* for a wandering troop of brigands !

The gaudy costume, the martial lower of the deep-seated eyes, that slunk askance if you strove to read them !—the mustachio that curled on a swarthy cheek, and shaded teeth of ivory whiteness :—the clang of arms, and the light humming of some roguish air, as here and there, a trifle sung to wile away the tedium of his march,—all these were at least but sources of animation and amusement.

It is a sort of paradox in nature, but so it is,—that women,—the kind, the austere, the impassioned, or the insipid,—one and

all are charmed to the extent of fascination with the pride and pomp of war!

The smooth-skinned savage dancing around the forest fire, and the beauty of a court, who smiles disdain on princes! both are equal here. Their eyes will glisten, and their hearts beat faster, when the scone-shell or the trumpet, summonses to arms! The glittering steel delights and dazzles; and in a blind infatuation, they neither care nor think,—how soon the stains of mortal strife may dim those lightning-gleaming blades,—or the loud symphony that dances like a spiritual triumph in the air! be hushed in tumult, and exchanged for shrieks of agony and groans of death.

At a giddy height the road has gained a level of some thousand furlongs. The crags that tower above, yawn at their base in deeply indented fissures; and here and there, obtruding masses form mimic bastions and overhanging ramparts,—all matted with

ivy, broken, torn, and crumbling, as if the ruins of some Titonic fortress of a former world.

On some of the verdant slopes beneath, and sheltered by a wall of precipices facing the south,—scattered at long distances are seen the stone-piled huts of mountain shepherds, who have trenched and terraced up the scanty soil, between the ledges of the rocks, so as to plant a few low scrambling vines around them; with perhaps a garden, and a scanty field of grain.

Farther on,—and crowning the summit of an isolated hill, stand the cracked and smoke blackened walls of some baronial hall,—sacked and fired in the troubles of the Middle Ages.

The spot was chosen with a wary eye,—secure as it might seem by art and nature; and yet the mountain fortress fell,—doubtless by treachery; and hence a man might mora-

lize ;—and say, that wit, though all perverted as that of the ignoble angel, is in itself far stronger than the high embattled wall, and sharper than the sword.

To Carema, it told of more ;—that ruin related a long and mournful history of the former state of her native country : when the petty struggles of an arrogant and selfish noblesse deluged fair Italy with blood ; —and as evil gathers on itself !—the wreck intestine foes had left, when they, like famished wolves, were grown too weak to struggle longer in a self-consuming rivalry, at last was torn away by some more fell and overbearing combatant ! —The foreign conqueror snatched, and soon possessed all that the domestic spoiler in his folly had chosen rather to ruin than enjoy.

Thus toiling on, hour after hour, notwithstanding the grandeur of the mountain scenery, and the changing lights that played

on the rich carpet of champaign country beyond, the way, from its constant air of desolation, at last grew sad and wearisome.

The conversation of Madalena too, usually so gay, and sparkling with wit and pleasure, had strangely flagged;—it might be, that she thought the more,—for as we all know, a bride elect has too many fancies of her own to find room for those of other people; be this as it might, her replies to the sportive sallies of Carema became, with every league, more faint and pointless,—until both felt a relief in silence.

Fazzello had as much small talk at command as would furnish a novel of fashionable life with ladies' prattle, equivocal anecdote, and repartee;—but he, poor fellow, though on common occasions a privileged person, was now condemned to a most unwilling silence; his duty in that particular having been enjoined by his lord, in a few words, but with one of those peculiar looks, that the giddy-

brained page, however thoughtless on other matters, was never known either to misconstrue, or to forget.

Under these circumstances, his answers to Carema's remarks were short and simple, although the accompanying bow was an eloquent acknowledgment of her condescension. He had, too, with great skill and promptitude, guarded against the dangers, and done much to alleviate the inconveniences of the journey; and now, when the party, after having partaken of some refreshment, were about to descend a ravine so deep, that a midnight shade prevailed beneath, while a brilliant gleam of sunshine flashed on the hanging rocks that formed its upper gorge, the idea struck him of a freak, which was at least intended to amuse.

This whim was the representation of a mountain fight;—and having rather assumed on the sufferance of the ladies, than obtained their consent, he galloped forward, to prepare

for the exhibition of what he called his “innocent little make-believe of a battle.”

An ambush having been duly planted at different heights, behind the masses of broken rock at the lower part of the ravine, the assailant party dashed forward at full speed to force the pass,—and in a moment the gorge of the yawning chasm was filled with smoke and fire.

The snorting of the horses and the clash of weapons, as the swordsmen began to play their part, commingled finely with the sudden shots that resounded in rattling echoes from the rocks; and the affair was growing highly animated, when an accident occurred, that with all his foresight, Fazzello had not even thought of.

Carried away by that sympathy, which the lower animals feel equally with ourselves, on occasions of physical excitement, the horses of the ladies, whose bridles were held by a

boy, broke suddenly away, and galloped off to join their comrades in the dell beneath.

At this moment, it was fortunate for the 'necks,' at least, of the fair equestrians, that they happened to be mounted in the Italian style, for the riding was what a dragoon would have called 'deuced short, rough, and heady.' The horses, too, who had been used to the mountain tracks, dashed over all impediments with a startling velocity.

At the bottom of the ravine lay a deep and dangerous pit of water, fed by a streamlet trickling from the rocks, and from this the road (if such it could be called) passed off at a direct angle. To rein in a horse at full speed,—or to turn him cleverly off at this perilous point, were feats only to be accomplished by a rider with a strong arm, and a steady eye,—even if those of a 'man;' and granting that he were both a good horseman and a bold one! — what

then would be the fate of those who were hurried forward in their helplessness and beauty, at a whirlwind speed!—their dress disordered, and the clouds of smoke that filled the chasm rolling before them, like bursting billows as they passed.

In the tumult of the sham fight below, this fearful accident had not, at first, been noticed,—and when it was discovered, the wild outcries of the troopers, and their vain attempts at a rescue, only served to make the matter worse.

Forward!—forward they came!—The powerful horse rode by Carema, being some yards in advance, when as the jaws of the pit began to show, with its dark deep waters gleaming faintly far beneath, the noble animal caught the alarm; and as if palsied with the pang of sudden fear, his muscles grew rigid on the instant, and his joints were motionless!—but all in vain; for while his nostrils seemed breathing fire, and his di-

lating eyes rolled round in agony! still forced headlong forward by the impetus of weight and former motion, his stiffened limbs were sliding down the slab of rock that overhung the fatal verge; and so swift was the descent, that trails of sparks followed at each armed hoof, like burning serpents on the dark and polished stone.

Carema had remained silent,—conscious, and yet resigned to the awful fate that threatened, when one of the troopers, with a desperate effort, caught at the horse's head, and threw him on his haunches!—still both slid forward,—when by a second exertion of almost super-human strength the horse was absolutely stopped.

In this last struggle the gallant trooper unfortunately fell in such a way that the weight of the animal struck full upon his chest.

In the mean while, more assistance having arrived, the other horse was secured with

less difficulty ; and it was found that very fortunately neither of the ladies had suffered, except from the alarm.

Far different was the case of the poor trooper ;—although instantly withdrawn from the pressure of the overthrown horse, yet still no recovery of sensation had occurred ; and as they laid him on a mossy shelf of rock beside the streamlet, and sprinkled the fresh cold water on his brow, it was evident that the violet tint of his closed eyelids was fast darkening into the shadow of oblivion :—and yet once more they opened for that last lingering look the parting soul seems to challenge from the grasp of Death !—That look, that treasures worlds in one short moment, if those that love are near to register the thoughts read only by affection,—and all too many and too vast for words.

The trooper's gaze was to the heavens, and then upon the green and smiling earth ;

for linked with strangers, these, though 'inanimate,' were then as old familiar friends!

Yes! on the earth and heavens.—The comrades, that stood around in silence and in sadness, were little heeded by the dying man;—once the light companions of the festive hour; the indifferent sharers of his stern vocation; and all 'too often' his tempters into crime,—they now had little solace for the grave.

His glance was still upon the changing elements;—but his deep thoughts,—the yearnings of his bursting heart,—these were far away! communing with a pale and drooping girl, that from a lattice in the City of the Sea, fair Venice, looks out upon the Adriatic every night as she has sworn,—to think of him, and pray.

The memory of that beloved one has thawed his rugged features, even as the pulses of his life are growing chill:—a tear, the

first since boyhood, trembles in his eye; and he would bless her,—ere his spirit passes if he may!—The fatal shade of dissolution faintly gray, steals ghastly like a vapour over his countenance, changing with that emotion; and with the effort, a sanguine froth imbues his lip.—His dying eye hath caught Carema, and as it glazes, he may mistake her for the form of her he loves?

Ah, no,—a pious wish of retribution for a life ill spent is busy with his brain:—one word—one word of ‘caution’ may yet be worth an empire!—Raising himself with a slow convulsive motion, he beckons her approach;—and kneeling by his side, awe-struck and pallid as the fresh hewn marble! Carema stoops and listens still and breathless.

“Beware the ‘*Jattatore*!’* —Beware, the Lord ——”

The poor wretch could no more;—the

* ‘*Jattatore*,’ a man with an *evil* eye.

next sound, that should have been a word, sunk to a hollow moan, lost in a long and feeble rattle as the loaded lungs collapsed, and all was over.

Still on her knees,—as one struck motionless! Carema gazed wildly on the dead:—long and wistfully she gazed, as if the pallid lips might yet find sound to finish that strange warning. — “The Jattatore!” she repeated unconsciously—

“The Jattatore!”

“A weak and wicked superstition, Lady,” said the page, Fazzello, taking her hand with a respectful earnestness to remove her from the corpse.

“Remember, Lady, that the best men have secret foes,—and there are some—dotards and fools!—who so would dare to term the Lord Montrano!”—

“The Lord,”—repeated Carema, with a shudder.

“The last words the dead man uttered, were, ‘*The Lord!*’—he meant—”

“Nothing!—nothing!—He meant nothing, Lady:—What could he mean?”—said Fazzello, with a startling impatience.

Just at that moment the shrill cry of a hawk was heard, and still quivering with life, the bleeding body of a dove fell at their feet.

At the instant, a carbine shot was fired at the plumed felon as he swooped,—but fired in vain; he stretched his pinions to the sun and drifted off upon the wind.

Rendered morbidly sensitive by the late occurrence, this last incident gave to Carema an involuntary thrill of fear:—it seemed an omen, implying all the dead man had not lived to utter:—and it inspired a strange vague sense of danger to herself, and a dread of the ‘*Lord Montrano.*’

With as little delay as might be, the party prepared to move from this fatal ravine. The

body of the poor trooper having been wrapt in a cloak, was strapped on his own horse, for with the deep-rooted prejudice of the lower Italians, his comrades felt consoled by the resolution they had taken, that he should be interred 'with priest and bell, in consecrated ground.'

As the march was recommenced—all were equally silent and dispirited; the distant landscape too began to lower. Cold and sudden gusts of wind rustled mournfully in the foliage of the stunted trees, and howled in hollow cadences from crag to crag; at times too, the heavy swapping sound of the corpse, as the horse beneath it slipt and staggered, came on the ear with an awful sense of death:—the sear leaves whirled in frequent eddies in the way, and the small birds were chirruping with a shrill uneasy cry.

Carema rode forward, pale and faint, the very picture of despondency—when, as if awakened to the recollection of a long

neglected duty, Madalena became at once unusually loquacious, and as strangely gay; now relating some *piquant* anecdote; then coaxing her well-trained horse into an unexpected gambol, as if in accident; or singing some light fantastic roundelay, with that arch and buoyant humour, that was all her own.

The extremes of gaiety and of grief are born of weakness!—This noisy mirth, although overcharged and artificial, was yet so skilfully managed by the fair dissembler, that the rest of the party who were unconscious of her drift, from mere social sympathy, began insensibly to assume an air of cheerfulness.

The rough troopers nodded knowingly to each other:—Fazzello found it difficult to maintain the silence his duty enjoined, as he beat time to the music; and Carema felt revived, and half inclined to smile, even at her own forebodings. In the meantime, the

sullen aspect of the elements increased with every hour;—the surgings of the gale came violent and fast; the cloudy wrack in the darkening heavens drove faster, while the sunbeams shooting through at intervals, were of that pale and watery sheen that indicates a storm.

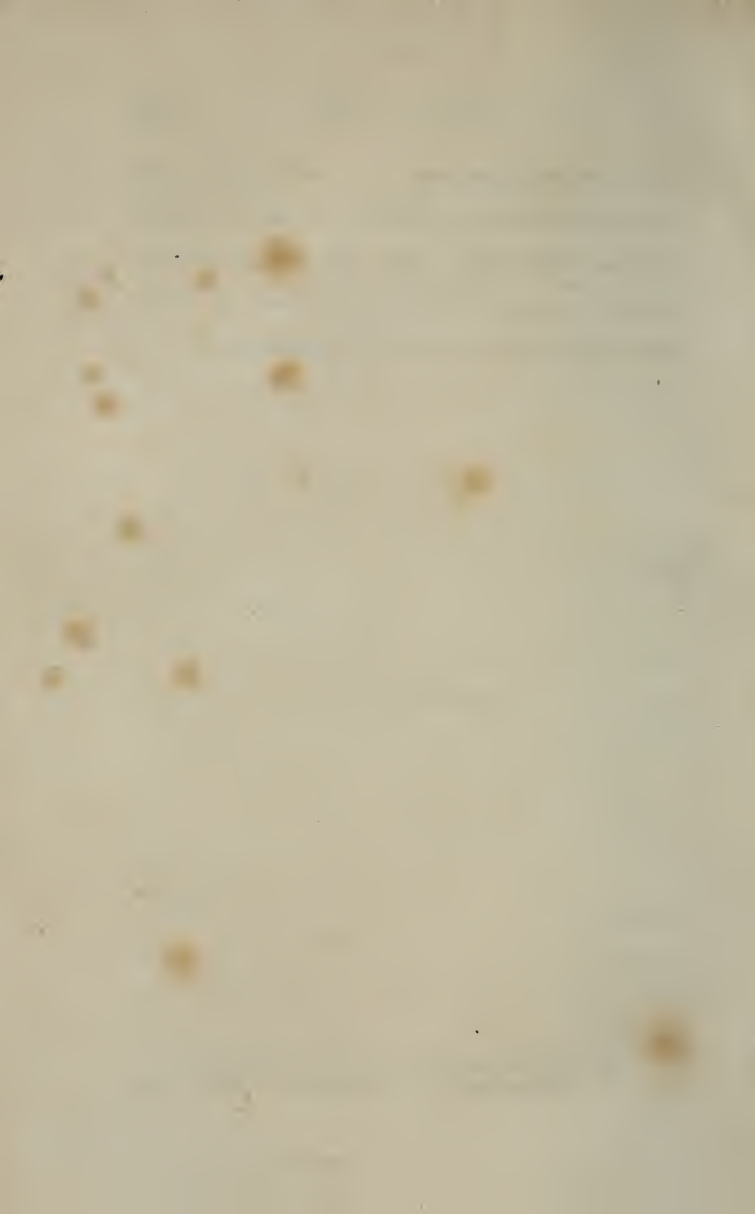
Fazzello urged his men to a quicker pace, —and the wearied horses instinctive of the coming change, gave themselves to the task with a rattling speed.

With the decline of day the journey was verging to its close,—and as the party were climbing a headland, whose crest Fazzello said would present an enchanting view of the castello of his lord, Carema felt a thousand vague surmisings busy at her heart.

The ridge of this promontory was hardly won, when the threatened storm burst forth with sudden force. Thick drifts of rain swept rapidly from hill to vale, wrapping the distance in one contiguous vail of dim obscurity,

and Carema's excited imagination was left to disappointment, and her heart to those unquiet thoughts, that the trooper's unfinished warning, and the approaching interview with Montrano, could not but excite.

END OF VOL. II.





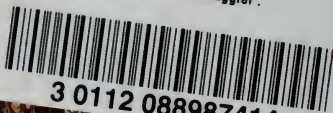








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